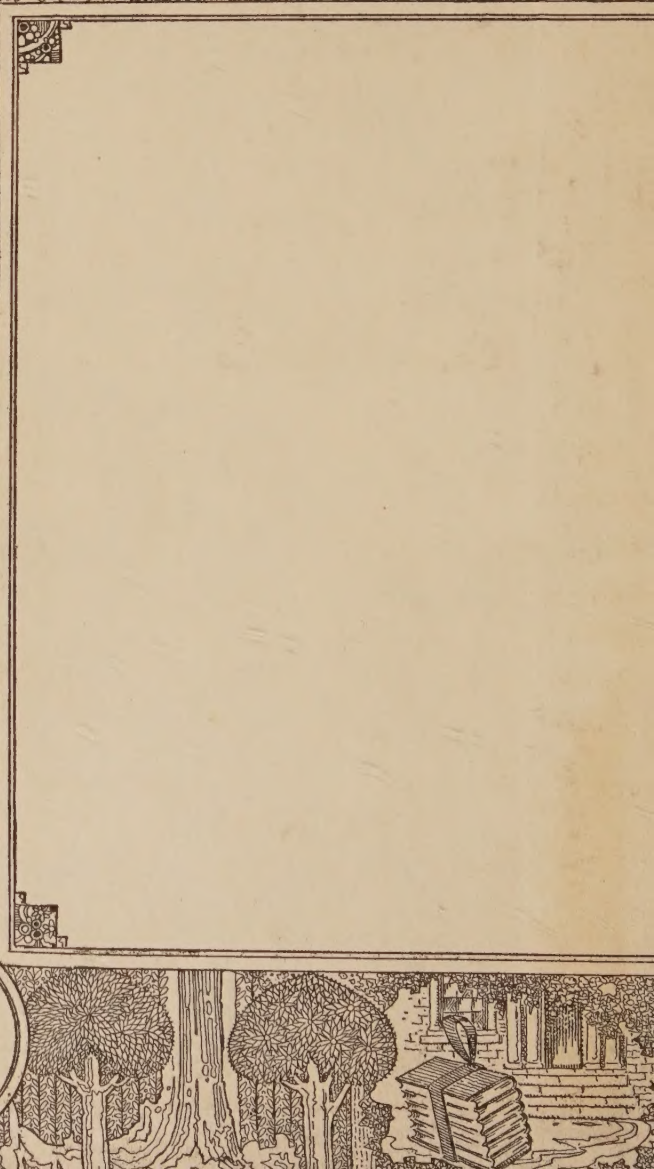
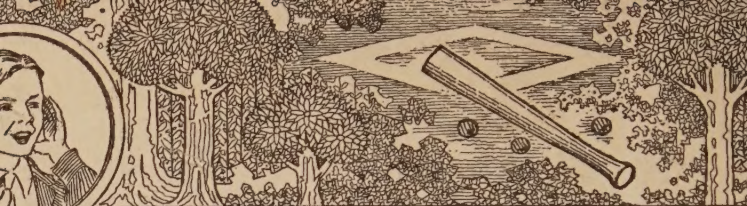


BUDDY

on the FARM



HOWARD R. GARIS





May 1943

This is my Book

Paul Klee
from

Mother





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"OH! OH!" HE CRIED IN WONDERMENT. "WHAT A
QUEER RIDE I'M HAVING."

"Buddy on the Farm"

Buddy on the Farm
or
A Boy and His Prize Pumpkin

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

*Author of "Buddy in School," "Buddy and His
Winter Fun," "The Curlytops," "Uncle
Wiggily," Etc.*

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

THE BUDDY BOOKS

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

By HOWARD R. GARIS

BUDDY ON THE FARM

Or a Boy and His Prize Pumpkin

BUDDY IN SCHOOL

Or a Boy and His Dog

BUDDY AND HIS WINTER FUN

Or a Boy in a Snow Camp

(Other volumes in preparation)

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Buddy on the Farm

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE BIG SPLASH	1
II THE WONDERFUL SKATES	13
III "MONEY! MONEY!"	23
IV GRANDPA'S LETTER	37
V OFF TO THE FARM	46
VI THE CHINESE CHICKEN	57
VII THE LOST COW	66
VIII A BIG SURPRISE	74
IX A QUEER RIDE	83
X UNDER THE BARN	98
XI LOST IN THE CORN	109
XII BUDDY'S PUMPKIN	122
XIII THE BIG FISH	131
XIV DOWN IN A HOLE	142
XV BUDDY'S WATER CART	152
XVI COWS IN THE CORN	163
XVII THE BIG WIND	172
XVIII THE COUNTY FAIR	183
XIX THE PRIZE PUMPKIN	195
XX BUDDY WINS THE RACE	204

BUDDY ON THE FARM

CHAPTER I

THE BIG SPLASH

HURRAY! Hurray! No more school!"

"What fun we'll have!"

"No more home work! Hurray! Hurray!"

Boys and girls ran out of the yard, along the streets and across the fields. They swung their straps of books around their heads in joy at being let out for the long vacation.

"Whoop!" cried Buddy, jumping up and down as he shook his dark red hair back out of his dancing, blue eyes. "Whoop de doodle! No more school for a long, long time!" He tossed his books, in their strap, high up over his head, letting them go.

"Oh, look what Buddy did!" yelled Tom Gordon, whose hair was as black and glossy

as a crow's wings. "Look what Buddy did!"

"He threw his books up in the tree!" shouted Harry Clee.

"Oh, Buddy Martyne!" exclaimed Mary Norse, shaking her flaxen hair out of her blue eyes. "Oh, Buddy!"

For in his joy at being out of school for the long vacation of nine weeks, Buddy, that sturdy little boy who was so lively, had tossed his books higher than he meant to and up into a tree they sailed like some queer bird.

"They'll come down again!" said Buddy, standing under the branch and waiting for his books to fall. He was going to catch them in his hands.

But the books did not fall. The strap had tangled around the tree branch and there the books dangled like some big cocoanut.

"Oh-oo-oo-oo! You'll get it when you go home, Buddy!" said Agnes Fleck, the fattest little girl in Clover school.

"Pooh, that's nothing!" said Buddy, whose real name was Dick. But everyone called him

Buddy, just as soldiers call one whom they like very much that same name. All the children liked Buddy Martyne. "They're only my old books," said Buddy. "I'll have new ones next term!"

"That's so!" said Tom Gordon. "I guess I'll throw my books up in a tree, too!"

"Don't you dare do that, Tom Gordon!" cried his sister Lucy. "If you do I'll tell mother!"

"Aw, don't be a tattle-tale!" Tom started to chase his sister.

"Anyhow, maybe if you chucked up your books they'd come down, even if Buddy's didn't," said Harry Clee, as Tom came back, not having caught his sister who was a good runner.

"Maybe they will," agreed Tom. "I'm going to try," and he looked at his sister as if daring her to run home and tell. But, for all that Lucy had said she would do this, she decided to stay and see what happened. Then Buddy had a bright idea.

“Throw your books up, Tom,” he said to his playmate, “and see if you can knock mine down. Then I won’t have to climb the tree after them.”

“Oh, are you going to climb the tree?” asked fat Agnes.

“Sure I am!” boasted Buddy. “I can climb bigger trees than that!” and he pointed to the one along the sidewalk in front of the school, from a branch of which his strap of books dangled.

“Wait ’till I see if I can knock ’em down!” offered Tom.

“Let Buddy throw your books up,” suggested Harry. “Buddy’s a good shot. He pitches on our ball team.”

“I’m going to throw my own books,” decided Tom. “Then if they get stuck it won’t be Buddy’s fault.”

“That’s so!” and Buddy laughed, which showed his white, even teeth flashing in the sun. “One bunch of books stuck in a tree is enough for me in one day. Go ahead, Tom!”

So, while the other boys and girls gathered around him and Buddy, Tom swung his strap of books around and around his head to get a good aim. Then he let them fly so they would shoot upward into the tree.

“Watch ’em go!” he cried.

Up Tom’s books went through the branches, close to, but not quite hitting Buddy’s. There was a silent pause while the children waited to see what would happen. Then, instead of Tom’s books knocking Buddy’s down, the second bunch also caught in the tree branches.

“Now they’re both stuck!” cried Harry.
“Whoop-la!”

For a moment no one said anything else. Some of the girls looked frightened and even some of the boys, though they did not care much for studying books, seemed serious. Then Buddy cried:

“I’ll get ’em both down! Look out the way!”

He jumped up in the air and clicked his heels together. It was a funny little trick

which he had seen his uncle Henry do more than once.

“What are you going to do, Buddy?” asked Agnes Fleck as she and the others moved aside, leaving a little lane, like an aisle between their desks at school, so the auburn-haired and blue-eyed boy could get closer to the tree. “What are you going to do?”

“I’m going to climb up that tree and get Tom’s books and mine!” exclaimed Buddy. “Whoop! Here I come!”

Buddy was as quick and full of life as a jumping frog. Once more he leaped into the air and clicked his heels together.

“I wish I could do that trick,” sighed Jerry Fleck who was even fatter than his sister. Jerry had tried that heel-clicking trick of Buddy’s many times but never could do it. He always fell down.

“Pooh, that’s nothing!” Buddy said as he drew nearer the tree. “You ought to see my Uncle Henry do it. He can knock his heels together very fast three times!”

“In one jump?” asked Tom.

“Sure, in one jump!”

“Whew!” murmured Harry Clee. “That’s great!”

“Now I’ll climb up and get both straps of books!” said Buddy. He knew he could do it for he had often climbed trees, not only around Mountchester, where he lived, but in the country on his grandfather’s farm. This tree was not nearly so hard to climb as many others up which Buddy had scrambled before, to get something that was up in the branches or just because he loved to twine his arms and legs among the leaves and hang there “like a monkey,” as Lola Wagg, the Martyne cook, used to say with a laugh.

“Look out you don’t fall!” called Mary Norse as Buddy began to hitch himself up the trunk of the tree.

“I’m not afraid,” he answered.

And then, when Buddy had reached up and grasped, with his hands, the lowest branches of the tree, and when he intended to pull him-

self farther up amid the leaves, all of a sudden something happened.

“Look out!” yelled Tom Gordon.

“Oh, is Buddy going to fall?” asked Agnes, and she covered her eyes with her fat little hand.

“No, I’m not going to fall!” said Buddy.

“The books are falling! Both bunches of ’em! Look out below!” cried Harry. “Look out!”

And down fell Buddy’s strap of books and also Tom’s.

“Buddy jiggled ’em loose!” said Mary, and that is what happened. The shaking of the tree, or the “jiggling” of it, as Mary called it, when Buddy was climbing up, loosened the bundles of books where they were caught on the branches, and down they tumbled. Buddy was almost hit on the shoulder by his own books which fell close to him. And Tom’s books landed on the toes of fat Jerry Fleck.

“Oh! Oh!” yelled Jerry, dancing around on one leg. “What a bump!”

“You aren’t hurt!” laughed Buddy as he slid down the tree to the ground for, now that the books were free, there was no use in climbing up. “You aren’t hurt, Jerry! Don’t cry!”

Truth to tell Jerry was so cushioned with fat that he very seldom was hurt when he fell or when anything fell on him, and he was soon laughing again with the others as Buddy and Tom picked up their books and hurried along toward their homes, still chanting:

“Hurray! Hurray! No more school!”

It was, indeed, the last day of school at the beginning of the long, summer vacation. Exercises had been held in the different rooms, and those boys and girls who had “passed” were given their examination marks on cards.

Then Buddy had run out with the others.

“Where you going this vacation, Tom?” asked Harry as he walked along beside Buddy, all three little lads swinging their straps of books. “We’re going to the seashore.”

“I guess we’re going to the mountains,” said Tom. “Whereabouts you going, Buddy?”

"I don't know yet," answered the red-haired boy, blinking his blue eyes. "But I hope we go to my grandfather's farm. I always have lots of fun there."

"I'd like to go on a farm," said Tom.

"So would I," added Harry.

"You can come down to my grandfather's," invited Buddy. "It's a big place. There's lots of room. And he's got cows and horses and chickens and big fields and I can ride on a horse!"

"Whoo-ee! What fun!" sighed Tom. "But I guess I got to go to the mountains with my father and mother."

"Maybe there are horses in the mountains," suggested Buddy.

"Maybe," agreed Tom. "I hope so."

The boys took a short cut across the lots toward their homes, all of which were near together, and not far from Buddy's house. It was a hot day, late in June, and as Buddy led the way beneath some willow trees he and the other boys heard the musical murmur of

water. For there was a brook near the willow trees.

“Say, let’s go in swimming!” cried Tom, suddenly.

“Oh, let’s!” agreed Harry. But Buddy shook his head.

“Mother told me to come straight home from school,” said the lively little red-haired boy.

“Well, go ask her if you can go in and we’ll wait here for you,” suggested Tom. “My mother always lets me go in when I want to and when it’s hot like it is now.”

“It’s hot enough,” agreed Buddy. “Well, you wait here for me.”

“Let’s take a look at the water first,” said Tom.

“I hope it’s wet!” laughed Harry.

The three boys went to the edge of the brook where it flowed under the willow trees and looked down off a bank of grass and dirt. Below them the water was quite deep enough for swimming, though in most places the brook was too shallow for anything but wading.

“Oh, boy! That water looks cool!” cried Tom. “I’m going in!”

“So am I!” echoed Harry.

And then he suddenly went in before he was quite ready and with all his clothes on. For as he stood too close to the edge of the bank the dirt broke from beneath his feet and into the brook Harry fell with a big, loud splash.

“Oh! Oh!” cried Harry as he felt himself falling. “Oh! Oh!”

“Look out!” yelled Tom, but it was too late.

“I’ll get you out!” yelled Buddy. “Hold your mouth shut so you won’t swallow any water, Harry, and I’ll get you out!”

Buddy began taking his books out of their long strap and Tom was wondering what the red-haired lad was about to do. But Buddy knew.

“Help! Help!” gurgled Harry, splashing about in the water. “Help me out!”

“I’ll get you out!” cried Buddy.

CHAPTER II

THE WONDERFUL SKATES

BUDDY was a good swimmer for so small a boy, but he was not going to jump in the brook to save his chum Harry. Buddy knew a better way. He went as near as he dared to the edge of the bank where the dirt had broken away, letting the other boy fall into the water.

“Look out!” cried Tom, “or you’ll fall in yourself, Buddy!”

“I’ll be careful!” was the answer. “Here, Tom, you stay back there where it’s safe and take hold of my left hand and brace yourself hard!”

“What are you going to do?” Tom wanted to know. All this time poor Harry was splashing about in the water. He was not a good swimmer but he had heard what Buddy said

about keeping his mouth closed, which is what everyone must do who falls in the water. And the hard splashing, that Harry was doing with his arms and legs, helped to keep him afloat, almost as if he were swimming.

"I'm going to lower my book strap down over the edge where Harry can grab hold of it!" cried Buddy.

"Oh, I see!" exclaimed Tom. "Then we'll pull him out, same as we did when you fell through the ice once when you were skating."

"That's it!" said Buddy. "Grab hold of me and hold tight, Tom!"

By this time Buddy had slipped his right hand through the loop of his book strap and was holding the other dangling end over the edge of the bank. It was long enough so that it dipped into the water. Buddy then reached his left hand back where Tom could take hold of it. And Tom did this, at the same time bracing his feet in the soft ground as he had often braced himself when he and Buddy were playing football. They had to brace, then.

“Grab hold of the strap and we’ll pull you out!” cried Buddy to the boy in the water and Harry knew enough to do this. He splashed his way to the hanging strap, caught hold with both hands and began to pull himself up.

If Buddy had been all alone on top of the bank he might not have been strong enough to pull Harry out. But with the help of Tom he could easily do this, for two boys are stronger than one. And in a short time Harry was safe up on shore again with his chums. Dripping wet he was, but safe.

“Oh! Oh!” he cried with a little shiver, not because he was cold, but because he had been frightened. “Oh! Oh! Look at me! I’m all wet!”

“Course you are!” laughed Buddy. “You can’t fall in the water with all your clothes on and not get wet! Ha! Ha!”

“Ha! Ha!” laughed Tom, for, now that Harry was safe, it was a sort of joke. Then Harry stopped being afraid and as he saw the water running out of his pockets, and from the

bottoms of his short trousers, he, too, began to laugh. After all it was more of a joke than anything else.

"I went in swimming with my clothes on!" laughed Harry.

"Well, you'd better go home, now, and take 'em off," said Tom.

"Yes," agreed Buddy, "I guess you had, Harry. Come on, we'll go with you and tell your mother how it happened so she won't blame you."

"Oh, she won't blame me when she knows I didn't mean to fall in," said Harry. "Say, I'm nice and cool, now!" he added. "And it was a good thing you thought of pulling me out by that strap, Buddy. That water was deep and I can't swim very good with my clothes on."

"It is hard," said Buddy. "Yes, I'm glad I had my strap," and he loosened it from his wrist and began picking up his books. By this time a man, who had started to run across the field toward the brook when he heard the

shouts of the boys, reached the place. The man thought some accident had happened.

"Is anybody drowned?" he asked, as he saw the three boys, one all wet.

"I almost did," Harry said, "but Buddy and Tom got me out."

"That's good," said the man. "But you shouldn't push each other in the brook. It's too deep here for such fooling."

"Nobody pushed him in, mister!" said Buddy.

"I fell in myself," said Harry. "But I didn't mean to."

"Oh, then there's no harm done," spoke the man with a laugh and, making sure the boys were all right, he turned away.

Buddy and Tom helped Harry wring as much of the water from his clothes as could be squeezed out and then they hurried along with him by a short cut to his home. Mrs. Clee was somewhat frightened when she saw her boy, dripping wet, coming up the walk, but Buddy and Tom soon told her how it had hap-

pened, and she did not even scold Harry.

"Get your wet things off," she said. "It's too bad you had on your second best suit, but it can't be helped. I guess I can iron out the wrinkles. And I'm much obliged to you, Buddy and Tom, for pulling Harry out."

"Oh, we liked to do it," said Buddy with a little laugh. "Didn't we, Tom?"

"Sure!" answered Tom. "It was quite exciting!"

"I'll say it was!" exclaimed Harry.

"Well, I hope it doesn't happen again," said Mrs. Clee with a smile.

"See you after supper, fellows!" called Harry to his chums as he went in, his shoes making queer ploppity-plop sounds because of the water inside them.

"So-long!" called Buddy and Tom as they turned to go to their own homes. Buddy's was farther off than was Tom's and the red-haired boy soon parted from his friend and hurried along by himself, swinging his books, thinking what a good thing it was he had a strong strap

and wondering what he would do, now that the long vacation was here.

“I wonder where we’ll go?” said Buddy to himself as he walked along through the streets. “I didn’t hear Daddy or Mother say whether we would go to Grandpa’s this summer or to Uncle Henry’s. But I guess we’ll go somewhere; we always do.”

Thinking of the fun that was before him, in the happy summer days that were to come, Buddy began to whistle. He swung his books in a big circle at the end of the strap, and, as he suddenly turned a corner he nearly hit Bungo, the big, shaggy dog belonging to Mr. Tort, the grocer. Bungo was trotting around the corner and the books just missed his nose.

“Wuff!” howled Bungo in surprise. “Wuff!”

“Oh, excuse me!” exclaimed Buddy. “Did I hurt you, Bungo old boy? I didn’t mean to!”

Bungo, who did not quite know what to make of those swinging books, had been going to run away, thinking some one was trying to

hit him, but when he saw and smelled Buddy, whom he well knew, and when the dog heard Buddy's kind voice, he wagged his tail joyfully and thrust his cold nose into the boy's hand.

"Good old Bungo!" murmured Buddy for he liked the animal. "I wouldn't hurt you for anything."

He patted the dog, who wagged his tail harder than ever, and the two walked along the street together, as they often did when meeting, and Buddy began whistling again.

Then, all of a sudden he stopped and stared at the window of Mr. Rudolph's toy shop. There was something in the window that made Buddy forget all about Bungo and all about his whistling and even about having pulled Harry from the water with a strap.

"Gee! What wonderful skates!" murmured Buddy and he went so close to the window to look in that his nose was pressed quite flat against the outside glass. "Oh, what wonderful roller skates! I wish I had a pair."

Among the toys, books and games in the show window were some new roller skates. They were of a kind Buddy had never seen before. Not only were they of shiny nickle, and ball bearing, as a sign on them said, but the bright wheels were covered with soft rubber tires.

“Noiseless skates.” That is what they were called on the sign attached to them.

Buddy had a pair of the old-style ball bearing roller skates. Once they had been shiny and new, but they had never been noiseless. The wheels made a great racket as Buddy rolled along on them over the pavements. In fact, for a time, Buddy and his boy and girl friends rather liked the noise their skates made. But now Buddy’s skates were old. He had lost one of the ball-bearing wheels and had replaced it with a common sort, not so good. And the skates were more noisy than ever.

“But if I had a pair of these,” said Buddy to himself, looking at the rubber wheeled ones in the window, “I could ride along without any

noise. It would be almost like ice skating!" he whispered. "It would be—it would be like a *shadow* scooting along! Oh, I wish I had a pair of those wonderful skates!"

He spoke these last words out loud in his excitement and his nose was now pressed so close against the glass that, almost without knowing it, Buddy was giving himself quite a pain. But he didn't care.

"Oh, how I wish I had those wonderful skates!" he spoke again. And, then, to his surprise, a voice behind him said:

"Well, maybe you can have them!"

Buddy gave a little jump, turned half around and looked up.

CHAPTER III

“MONEY! MONEY!”

BUDDY half thought he might see some kind, old gentleman, with a white beard like the one Santa Claus wears in pictures, standing back of him, holding out a purse of money with which to buy the wonderful new skates. It would have been a great, delightful surprise to the little boy if this had happened.

Don't you think it would?

But it did not.

Instead he saw his own father standing there, looking down at him and smiling. Buddy put his hand up to his nose for in his eagerness he had pressed it so hard against the window that now it seemed to have no feeling in it. For a moment Buddy began to fear that he had lost his nose. But it was safe on his face, though still a bit flat. Then he asked:

"Did you say I could go in and buy those skates, Daddy?"

"No, I didn't exactly say that," answered Mr. Martyne, laughing a little. "Are they good skates, Buddy?"

"Dandy skates! The best I ever saw!" exclaimed the small boy. "They have ball bearings and if you got me these skates I could roll all around our stone walk at the side of the house and I wouldn't make any noise, even when Mother has a headache. They have rubber tired wheels, Daddy!"

More than once, when playing with his old rollers, Buddy had been told to go farther away from the house as he made so much noise his mother could not sleep. But with these rubber wheeled skates— Oh! Oh!

"Are you going to buy them for me, Daddy?" asked Buddy, eagerly.

"Oh, no, I couldn't do that," Mr. Martyne answered, still smiling. "Of course I *could* but I don't *want* to."

"But you *said* I could get them."

“I said *maybe* you could have them, Buddy,” answered his father. “When I came along and saw how hard you were looking at them, it came into my mind that there might be a way for you to get these skates.”

“How, Daddy?” asked Buddy eagerly. “How can I get those wonderful skates?”

“With money!”

“Oh, Daddy! Now you are teasing me!”

“No, really I’m not,” and Mr. Martyne put his hand on the little boy’s shoulder. “You wouldn’t expect Mr. Rudolph to hand you a new pair of skates out of his window for nothing; would you?”

“No, of course I wouldn’t,” Buddy answered. “They cost money.” And then he had another idea. “Oh, Daddy!” he almost shouted, “do you mean I can take the money out of my bank at home and buy these skates? Do you?”

“How much money have you in your bank, Buddy?” Mr. Martyne asked.

Buddy had to stop and think. Then he

slowly answered his father with a smile:

“I guess I got about a dollar 'n sixteen cents.”

Mr. Martyne did not need to point to the sign on the skates in Mr. Rudolph's window. Buddy could see it as plainly as could his father. The skates were five dollars.

“I—I guess I'll never get them,” sighed the little boy, and he seemed rather sad. He didn't whistle any more and he had forgotten all about the jolly vacation fun he was going to have. But again a bright thought came to him.

“Oh, Daddy!” he cried. “Do you mean you'll put enough with my dollar and sixteen cents so I can get the skates? Do you?” Once more Buddy was eager.

Slowly Mr. Martyne shook his head.

“What do you mean, Daddy?” Buddy was puzzled.

“Well, Buddy,” said his father and he was still smiling, “when anybody wants anything and they haven't the money to pay for it, what do they do?”

Buddy did not have to think long for an answer. He and his father had talked this over before, for they were great pals, chums and buddies.

“Why, if you haven’t money you must earn it! Is that what you mean, Daddy?” he asked. Once more he began to have hope and once more he pressed his nose flat against the window that he might see the wonderful skates better.

“Of course—that’s it—earn money if you haven’t it,” said Mr. Martyne. “That’s what I have to do.”

“And that’s what I’m going to do!” said Buddy firmly. “I’ve got a dollar and sixteen cents in my bank at home,” he went on. “These skates cost five dollars. I’ll need—” Buddy was trying to do mental arithmetic, or number-work, as he did it in class. But in his excitement, and considering this was the last day of school and that he had just pulled Harry out of the brook, he had so much to think of it is no wonder he could not think of the figures.

"Here's a pencil and paper," said Mr. Martyne. "Can you tell how much more you would need to buy the skates?"

Buddy took the pencil and paper, laid his books on the ledge of the toy store show window and began to do the little example in arithmetic. He subtracted \$1.16 from \$5.00 and what do you think he got for an answer? Yes, of course, \$3.84.

"Three dollars and eighty-four cents!" exclaimed Buddy. "That's right; isn't it, Daddy?"

"Yes, that's right."

"It's a lot of money!" said Buddy with a sigh. "How can I ever earn all that?"

He seemed very anxious.

"Well," said his father, "you don't have to go to school for a long time. Maybe you can earn some money during vacation, cutting grass, running errands and things like that."

"Oh, sure I can!" cried Buddy in delight. "And I'm going to! Oh, gee! Won't it be great to have those wonderful skates! They

won't make any noise and they'll go as fast as anything! Do you think I can really earn money enough to get them, Daddy?”

“I don't see why you can't. You have a start, with the dollar and sixteen cents in your bank. You earned that; didn't you?”

“All but a quarter that Uncle Henry gave me when I got so I could jump up in the air and click my heels!” Mr. Martyne laughed as he remembered when that happened.

“Well,” he said, “if you earned some, you ought to earn more, for you are a bigger boy now than you were then, Buddy. Have you been home since you got out of school?”

“No, Daddy. I was on my way but Harry Clee fell in the brook and I pulled him out and then Tom and I went home with him to tell his mother. I was going home now when I saw these skates and then you came along. I didn't know who you were when you spoke.”

Buddy laughed a little.

“I slipped up behind you,” said Mr. Martyne who had a law office down town and who

was coming from court when he saw his son. "I thought I'd tease you a little. Was Harry hurt?" he asked Buddy, anxiously.

"Oh, no, he just slipped in when the bank caved with him. I got him out with my book strap. But say, Daddy, do you think I could go in and look at those skates—I don't mean to buy them now." said the small boy, quickly. "I'd just like to look at 'em."

"I don't see any harm in that," agreed Mr. Martyne with a smile. "Come along!"

From beneath his bushy eyebrows and over the tops of his big glasses Anton Rudolph, the toy man, looked at Buddy and his father.

"Dose ball bearing rubber skates?" he exclaimed in his jolly, gruff voice that seemed half a laugh. "Sure I show dem! Dot iss der ferry latest in der new roller skates!" he went on as he handed one to Buddy over the counter. "Noiseless skates!" he said with a chuckle.

Buddy turned the skate over and over. He spun the wheels and listened to the click of the ball bearings. He ran the rubber wheels along

the counter and noticed that not a sound was to be heard.

“A fellow could go like lightning on these!” he said. “Oh, but I want a pair!”

“Shall I wrap dem up for him?” asked Mr. Rudolph with a look at Mr. Martyne.

“Not yet,” was the answer. “Buddy must earn the money for these new skates if he gets them. I bought his other pair, but they are good yet, and——”

“Oh, Daddy! One wheel is broken and they make a lot of noise!” It was Buddy’s last plea.

“They still have a lot of fun in them,” said Mr. Martyne. “I don’t mind him having a new pair, Mr. Rudolph, but he must earn the money—at least part of it,” and this last was said in such a low voice that Buddy, who was again spinning the wheels, did not hear it.

“Oh, sure!” exclaimed the toy shop keeper. “It iss goot dot a boy should earn der money. Dot vich too easy gomes by us, iss not liked so much as dot vich ve work hardt to get.”

"That's the idea," said Mr. Martyne. "I want Buddy to know the value of money. That's why I told him he could have these skates if he works a little this summer to earn money. He needn't work all the while," he went on.

"Oh, no!" agreed Mr. Rudolph. "Boys must blay. Vell, gome back here ven you haf der money earnt, Buddy, und der skates I vill gif to you," he said, laughing.

"Be sure and keep a pair for me," Buddy begged.

"Oh, sure!" chuckled the toy man. "Und if I sell all I haf I vill more order so dere vill be a pair for you, Buddy, my poy!"

"All right!" said the little lad with a half sigh and a last look at the shiny, new skates. And then, as he and his father went out of the store, Buddy was saying over and over to himself:

"Money! Money! How can I earn three dollars and eighty-four cents?"

There was much to tell his mother when he

reached home a little later. He told her about the closing exercises, how the books had been caught in the tree and how he and Tom had pulled Harry from the brook.

“My goodness!” exclaimed Mrs. Martyne. “I hope you don’t fall in, Buddy!”

“Pooh! If I did I could swim out! I can swim more than Harry!”

“Well, you must be careful. What are you going to do with your bank?” she asked as she saw Buddy taking it down off the mantle.

“I’m going to see just how much I have. Maybe it’s more than a dollar and sixteen cents. I’m going to get a new pair of rollers,” and he told about meeting his father who had not come home with him. Mr. Martyne had to go to his law office.

“My goodness!” exclaimed Mrs. Martyne again. “Aren’t your old skates good enough, Buddy?”

“Oh, no, Mother! You ought to see ’em! But say, do you know how I can earn any money? Does the grass need cutting?”

Buddy ran to look. But alas! The lawn had been cut that very day by John, the colored man who went about the neighborhood doing odd jobs.

"I'm going to cut it next time and earn the money!" declared Buddy. "Can I, Mother?"

"Well, we'll see about it," she said.

Buddy counted over and over again the dimes, nickels and pennies in his bank. But no amount of counting could make more than \$1.16.

"I've just got to earn the rest," he said. "Well, I'll have all summer to do it in. I'll have the skates when school opens again. I'm going out, now, and see if I can earn some money before supper."

Buddy often earned extra pennies by going on errands for the neighbors, and now he went from house to house along his street asking if any of his mother's friends wanted anything from the store.

None did, it seemed, until at about his sixth call Mrs. Blackmer was in a hurry for a yeast

cake and she gave Buddy five cents to run to the store at the corner and get one.

“You may keep the change, Buddy,” she said.

“Then I’ve earned two cents,” thought the little boy, for he knew a yeast cake cost three cents. So that night he had \$1.18 cents in his bank. Buddy was thinking so much about earning money and buying the skates that he quite forgot to ask his parents, that night, where they were going during the summer vacation. They always closed the house in Mountchester and went visiting. However Buddy was so busy counting his money again, and putting it back in his bank, that he paid little heed to what his father and mother were talking about. Until, at last Mrs. Martyne said:

“It’s time you were in bed, Buddy.”

“Well—all right—but tomorrow I’m going to earn money,” he said as he put his bank up on the mantle.

How long he had been asleep Buddy did not

know, but, all of a sudden, he was awakened by a noise down stairs. It was a loud noise, as if a window had been raised or a door opened. In an instant Buddy sprang out of bed.

“Maybe that’s a burglar after my money!” he exclaimed. “After my skate money! But he shan’t get it!”

He started to run toward the stairs in the dim light from the hall, and bumped into a chair, falling over it with a bang. At the same time he heard his father’s voice call:

“What’s the matter?”

CHAPTER IV

GRANDPA'S LETTER

BUDDY picked himself up off the floor of his bedroom where he had fallen after stumbling over the chair. He wasn't hurt except on the big toe of his left foot which had bumped against the leg of the chair. But Buddy wasn't going to let a little thing like a stubbed toe keep him from saving the money in his bank.

He limped out into the hall where a dim light was always kept burning all night, for often Buddy got up to get a drink. Once more, from below, came his father's voice asking:

“What's the matter?”

“There's a burglar after my dollar and sixteen cents—I mean my dollar and eighteen cents!” cried Buddy. “Don't let the burglar get my bank! Hide it where he can't find it!”

“Burglar! Nonsense!” laughed Mr. Martyne. “Did you fall out of bed, Buddy?”

“No, I didn’t, thank you, Daddy, but——”

“I heard a fall,” went on Mr. Martyne. “Didn’t you hear me call up to know what was the matter?”

“Yes,” answered the little boy, standing in the hall and rubbing his stubbed toe gently against the calf of his other leg. “But I thought you were talking to the burglar.”

“Burglar! Nonsense!” and Mr. Martyne laughed again. “There isn’t any burglar here. You must have been dreaming or walking in your sleep.”

“I heard a noise,” murmured the little boy, “and I thought it was some one after the money in my bank that I want for those skates with rubber wheels. Did anybody come in?”

“No, child! Go back to bed,” called up his mother.

“I heard the door slam,” insisted Buddy. He wanted to be sure nothing was going to happen to his money. And yet how could it,

with his father and mother on guard? "What are you up for, in the middle of the night, if there isn't a burglar?" Buddy wanted to know.

"Dear me!" laughed Mrs. Martyne and Buddy could tell from his mother's voice that nothing serious had happened. "It isn't anywhere near the middle of the night. It is only ten o'clock, and the reason the front door slammed was because a letter came."

"A letter! So late at night!" exclaimed Buddy.

"It was a special delivery letter," went on Mrs. Martyne.

"Oh," spoke Buddy, yawning a little for now he was feeling sleepy again. Really it seemed as if it were almost morning but it had been only about an hour since he came up to bed. He must have fallen to slumber at once, and have slept heavily, when the banging of the front door awakened him. "Oh, a special delivery letter."

Buddy turned to go to his room again. He

knew what special delivery letters were. The person who sent them put on a special ten cent stamp and that would bring the letter around to the house even if the postman had passed on his regular trip. Generally a big boy on his bicycle brought special delivery letters, but Buddy never remembered one coming at night, before. He had seen the special delivery boy, with his leather pouch, jump off his bicycle late in the afternoon, sometimes, to give a letter to Mrs. Martyne. And though the ten cent stamp paid for the delivery, Buddy's mother often gave the boy five cents for himself.

"If I could deliver special letters this summer maybe I could earn enough to buy those skates," thought Buddy as he was getting into bed. He was thinking more about earning money and getting those wonderful skates than he was about the reason for a letter, even a special delivery one, coming after ten o'clock at night.

"I could go faster than any of the other fel-

lows if I had those skates," Buddy was murmuring to himself when he heard his father and mother coming up stairs and his mother said:

"Maybe we'd better tell him. He isn't asleep yet."

"Tell Buddy, do you mean?" asked Mr. Martyne.

"Yes," was his wife's answer.

Buddy was wide awake at once on hearing this. Maybe after all, there had been a burglar! Maybe his precious dollar and eighteen cents had been taken! That would be terrible!

He sat up in bed and listened. There was a telephone in his house. He thought, if his money had been taken, that his father would let the police know by telephone. They might get it back. And then Mrs. Martyne looked in the door of Buddy's room and asked:

"Did you hurt yourself when you stumbled?" For he had told his mother about it.

"I only stubbed my toe," he said. "It

doesn't hurt—hardly at all. I don't mind."

"That's good," she said, gently. "But even if it does hurt I think I have some good news for you—good news that will make you forget a stubbed toe, even if it hurt quite a lot."

The little boy jumped out of bed.

"Good news?" exclaimed Buddy, wondering what was coming next. "Am I going to get those skates in the morning?"

"Oh, no! What a boy you are!" laughed his mother. "Can't you think of any other good news than about skates? This special delivery letter that just came—what about that?"

"Oh, I thought it was something about Daddy's office," spoke Buddy for, he remembered, such letters had come to the house for his father, often early in the morning, before the regular mail delivery, and again late in the afternoon.

"No, Buddy," said Mrs. Martyne as she smoothed out the clothes on the little boy's bed, "this letter is about us—about you and me."

"About me?" Buddy wondered what it was.

"Yes. It's from Grandpa Kendall."

"From Grandpa Kendall's Blue Hill Farm?" asked Buddy, his heart was beginning to beat faster now.

"Yes," said his mother. "That's where the special letter is from."

"What's the matter?" Buddy wanted to know. He was old enough to guess that if a letter came so late at night something unusual must have happened.

"Nothing serious," his mother told him. "It's just that Grandma is a little ill and she wants me to come up and stay with her. So I am going."

Buddy was anxious as he asked:

"You're going, Mother? What about me? What about Daddy?" For a moment Buddy had a lonesome thought of being left without his mother all summer if she went away. Not even earning money to buy skates would make up for that.

"Oh, you're to come along, too, Buddy!" said Mrs. Martyne.

"I am? To Blue Hill Farm?"

"Surely! Do you think I'd leave you here, with vacation at hand, and go up there all by myself?" asked Mrs. Martyne with another little laugh.

"Then is Daddy coming?"

Buddy was happy now.

"Yes, as soon as he can. We are all going to the farm. That is what the letter is about, Buddy. It's an invitation from Grandpa Kendall to come up to his farm in Rillglade for the summer. We shall spend our vacation there. We hadn't quite made up our minds where to go, but now it is settled."

"Oh, goodie!" cried Buddy. And then he added, a little more quietly: "Is Grandma very sick?"

"Oh, no, just a little. I'm sure she will be better when we get up there. Mother isn't often ill but of course we can't expect an old lady to keep well forever. She'll be all right,

Buddy. Now go to sleep and tomorrow we'll talk about it."

"When will we go to the farm?"

"Very soon—about the middle of next week, I think; won't we, Clayton?" Mrs. Martyne asked her husband.

"Yes, I think so. But don't get too wide awake, Buddy, or you'll be a long while falling asleep. Now quiet down and don't think any more about such foolishness as burglars after your bank. They don't even know where it is."

"They might find it," murmured the little boy as he cuddled down in bed. "And it's got a dollar and sixteen—no, I mean eighteen cents in. But I'm glad we're going to the farm—awful glad! I'll have a lot of fun at Blue Hill." Then another thought came to Buddy. It was such a worrisome thought that it made him sit up in bed and call anxiously for his father who had gone out of the room

CHAPTER V

OFF TO THE FARM

DADDY! Daddy!" called Buddy.

"Yes; what is it?" Mr. Martyne turned back in the hall. "Why don't you go to sleep?"

"I want to ask you something." Buddy was getting out of bed again when his father looked in the door of his room and said:

"Now stay in, please! This is no time for questions, but I'll let you ask just one. Then you must go to sleep. Now what is it?"

"I didn't exactly want to ask you a question, Daddy," said the boy. "But maybe I better not go to Blue Hill with you."

"Not go to Blue Hill?" exclaimed Mr. Martyne in surprise. Blue Hill was the name of the farm owned by Grandpa and Grandma Addison Kendall, who were the father and

mother of Buddy's mother. "Why not?" Never before had Buddy ever spoken of such an idea. "Why don't you want to go?"

It was Mr. Martyne who was asking questions now.

"Well, I want to go," Buddy answered, "but I want to earn enough more money to buy those skates. And maybe, if I go to Blue Hill, I can't earn any money."

"Oh, ho!" and Mr. Martyne laughed so loudly and so heartily that his wife came back along the hall to see what was the matter and she said:

"Hush, my dear! You'll disturb the neighbors!" For it was a warm summer night and the windows were wide open.

"Don't worry about those skates," said Mr. Martyne. "If you think so much about them you won't have any fun this summer, Buddy. And that is partly what the summer vacation is for, to let boys have fun and grow strong so they can study harder in winter. But I think perhaps you can earn as much money on

a farm as you can here in Mountchester."

"Oh, do you really think so, Daddy?"

Buddy opened his eyes in surprise.

"Of course," said Mr. Martyne. "Now go to sleep."

So Buddy did, though for a little while after he put his head back on the pillow he was thinking of rubber wheeled skates, of books flying up into trees, of boys falling into lakes and of policemen standing guard over toy banks filled with pennies.

The sun was shining in Buddy's eyes when he opened them next morning and, for a moment, he could not remember what it was that gave him, as he told Lola Wagg "such a nice feeling inside." This was when Buddy had dressed, washed and hurried down to breakfast. Then he remembered all of a sudden.

"Oh, I'm going to the farm!"

"So I heard your mother say," remarked the maid for Buddy was having his breakfast alone in the bright golden-yellow "nook" that opened off the clean kitchen. Mr. Martyne

had to go to his law office early and Mrs. Martyne had eaten breakfast with him.

“Oh, then it isn’t a dream?” asked Buddy with a sigh of relief as Lola brought in his toast and egg.

He looked at her eagerly.

“Is what a dream?” asked the maid with a laugh. “Sure you do be talkin’ very queer, Master Buddy! Is what a dream?”

“I mean it isn’t a dream about me going to earn money to buy those skates and going to Blue Hill and the special delivery letter. I thought it might be a dream! I’m glad it isn’t!”

“Oh, you an’ your dreams!” chuckled Lola as she frothed the cocoa.

Then Buddy remembered all that had happened since he hurried out of school the day before. And a little later, when his mother showed him the special delivery letter from Grandpa Kendall, with its blue stamp, Buddy knew everything was all right.

“But do you think, Mother?” he asked quite

anxiously as he made ready to go to the store to get Lola some sugar she wanted in a hurry, "do you think I can earn any money on Grandpa's farm—I mean money for those skates?"

"I don't see why not," answered Mrs. Martyne. "There are many things to do on a farm—'chores', Grandpa calls them. Of course he does many things himself and he has hired men to work for him. But when I was a girl, and lived in the country, I used to earn money and so did my brothers—not much, but then we didn't want much. And I never had a pair of roller skates with rubber tired wheels!"

"You didn't?" cried Buddy in surprise.

"No, but I had other toys I liked just as well. Yes, I should say you could earn as much running errands and doing chores in the country on the farm this summer as you could here."

"I'm glad of that," Buddy said. "And I'm going to the store for you now, for nothing,

Lola," he told the maid, for often she gave him a penny or two out of her own pocket to speed him on his way when she wanted something in a hurry and had forgotten it herself.

"Sure, you're a good boy, Buddy!" said the maid with a laugh. "And if I find a penny rollin' up hill I'll give it t' ye fer thim skates I do be hearin' so much about!"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Buddy as he hurried off. I guess if I had to wait for those skates until you found a penny rolling up hill, Lola, I'd better use my old ones!"

"Skip along wid ye now!" she urged in her genial, Irish talk which she sometimes used in fun. "I do be wantin' that sugar sorely!"

So Buddy ran along and was making good time back with the sugar when he met Tom and Harry. Of course they had to stop and talk about what happened yesterday and Buddy told about the skates in Mr. Rudolph's toy store window.

"I'm going to have a pair!" Buddy boasted. "That is when I earn the rest of the money—I

got a dollar and sixteen—no, I mean eighteen cents.”

“How you going to earn the rest of it?” asked Harry.

“On my Grandfather’s farm at Blue Hill,” Buddy answered. “I’m going to be a sort of hired boy, and maybe I’ll ride horses.”

“Gee! That’s great!” cried Tom. “I wish I was going to a farm! We got to go to the seashore!” He seemed sad about it.

“And we got to go to the mountains!” sighed Harry. “I’d a heap rather go on a farm and earn money.”

“It’s going to be great!” declared Buddy. “Maybe,” he added generously, “if you tell your folks you don’t like it where you are,” and he looked at his chums, “they’ll let you come up to Blue Hill.”

“I wish they would, but I guess not.”

“Not much,” agreed Harry. “Come on. Let’s go down and look at those skates in Rudolph’s window,” he added. “It doesn’t cost anything just to look at ’em!”

"I can't come," said Buddy as his chums turned away. "I got to hurry back with this sugar to Lola. I promised her. See you this after."

"Sure—see you this after—so-long!" echoed the other boys, clipping short their talk.

When Buddy reached home he found his mother already at work beginning to sort out things that she would take to the country with her, and this made the boy realize that soon he would be on his way to Blue Hill.

"I'm going to pack up my things, too," he said.

"You don't need many," his mother told him. "Don't take along a lot of toys you won't use—remember you are going to work."

"Oh, that's so—and earn money for skates!" cried Buddy. "What fun!"

For a time it seemed to Buddy that the clock hands stood still. He wanted that day to pass quickly, and the next day and the next until it should be the day when they would start for Blue Hill. They were to go to Rillglade by

auto, for it was only about four hour's ride from Mountchester to Blue Hill Farm. Mr. Martyne would drive the touring car and spend a week with his folks. Then he might have to come back to his law office for a time before his vacation would start.

But what with going several times to look at the wonderful skates in the toy shop window, and what with playing with his chums, at last Buddy began to find the time going quickly. So that, almost before he knew it, the day arrived when they were to start for the country.

"Good-bye!" called Buddy to Lola who was not to go with them.

"Good-bye!" she answered. "An' don't skate too much!"

"I haven't got the skates yet!" laughed Buddy.

He had bidden farewell to his chums and playmates. Some of them had already gone on their vacations with their families, and others were to go in a day or so.

“Well, I guess we’re ready to start,” said Mr. Martyne as he looked to see that the different bundles and bags were in the auto. “All aboard, Buddy!”

“All aboard!” came the answer. “Step on it, Daddy!”

“Step on it! Such talk!” exclaimed Mrs. Martyne.

“I mean step on the gas,” laughed Buddy who was a real boy.

So off they started. It did not take long to run through Mountchester, which was only a small town, and soon they were in the open country, along the roads of which they would travel for about a hundred miles before reaching Blue Hill Farm. They had started about 10 o’clock in the morning and would stop for lunch at noon, arriving at Grandpa Kendall’s place in the middle of the afternoon.

It was a pleasant summer day and Mrs. Martyne enjoyed the ride. So did Buddy but he was thinking more of when he would get to the farm and begin to earn money. He won-

dered how a boy could earn money on a farm.

They stopped for lunch in a restaurant on a side street in a pretty village, about half way to Rillglade. Buddy finished first and, excusing himself, went out in the street to wait for his father and mother. As he was walking in front of the restaurant he saw, picking seeds from an apple core in the gutter, a large, brown hen. Suddenly Buddy had a new idea.

Walking on his tiptoes he slowly approached the brown hen from the back. She did not seem to see or hear the little boy.

“Here is where I earn some money toward my skates!” murmured Buddy as he made a sudden jump and caught the hen in his arms. “Oh, boy! This is great luck!”

CHAPTER VI

THE CHINESE CHICKEN

BUDDY Martyne was rather a queer little boy. He was different from many of his chums. In the first place he was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Martyne. But instead of being spoiled, as many lone children are, he was a manly little chap.

Buddy and his father and mother were like real pals, or chums. And Mr. and Mrs. Martyne wanted Buddy to grow up so that he could look after himself, and not always be asking them what to do or say.

So Buddy often did things all by himself that, perhaps, he should not have done. Sometimes he got into a little trouble this way. But his father used to say:

“I would rather Buddy did *something*, even if it isn't just the right thing, than to be lazy

and do *nothing*. But of course I will teach him not to do anything that would harm himself or others."

So, when Buddy saw that lone chicken picking apple seeds out of the gutter, in front of the restaurant where his father and mother were having lunch, the little boy decided to do something. Just as at the time when the books were caught in the tree and when he helped pull Harry out of the brook, Buddy did not wait to ask his parents whether or not he might do what he wanted to do.

The first thing he asked himself was:

"Is it wrong or will it hurt me or hurt anybody else?"

His father had taught him that.

And as what he intended to do did not seem to have any harm in it, he went right ahead and did it. And what Buddy did was to catch that chicken.

He swooped down on the fowl and, before the surprised hen could flutter out of the way, Buddy had her in his arms, holding her so

her wings could not flap. She scratched with her legs, for she was frightened, though she need not have been for Buddy was not going to harm her. Then the little boy held the legs of the chicken in one hand as he had seen the hired man do on his grandfather's farm.

Then Buddy cuddled the hen down between his body and his left arm and, suddenly, that chicken stopped trying to get away and nestled down, blinking her eyes and not cawing any more.

She seemed happy and contented.

At first, when Buddy caught her, that hen made a terrible cawing noise. My! You would have thought Buddy was going to hurt her very much. But he wasn't. He knew better than to harm a chicken. And had it not been that, just then, a number of automobiles in the street were honking their horns, so the traffic officer would turn the stop sign to let them go ahead—had it not been for the noise these auto horns made, Mr. and Mrs. Martyne, in the restaurant, might have heard the cack-

ling and squawking of the hen. But as it was, they did not know, until afterward, that Buddy had caught her.

If Buddy's father or mother had seen him catch that hen they might have stopped him. But they didn't see him, though some one else did and a very queer thing happened soon afterward. However, Buddy did not know that any one saw him. So, after the hen had become quiet, cuddling down in the little boy's arm and ending her cackling, Buddy walked with her toward the automobile in which the journey was being made to Blue Hill Farm. No one in the street seemed to pay any heed to what Buddy did. And because of the noise of the auto horns, as I have told you, no one seemed to hear the hen's squawks.

"There!" said Buddy as he put the hen in an empty box in the rear of the auto, among the satchels, and laid a board over her. "There you are! And you'll lay eggs for me and I'll sell them and get enough money to buy those skates!"

Now you know why Buddy made up his mind to catch that hen as soon as he saw her picking up apple seeds in the gutter. He was making plans to earn money. He knew there were hens on his grandfather's farm, and that they laid eggs which were sold for money.

"But Grandpa will want all his own eggs," thought Buddy. "He won't want to give me any eggs to sell for money. But if I had a chicken of my own I could put it in one of his coops and I could sell all the eggs she laid. I guess nobody wants this hen or she wouldn't be out in the street all alone. So I can have her for mine and her eggs will be mine."

With this clever idea in his mind, Buddy had caught the chicken. In the auto was an empty box. Mrs. Martyne had put it in the car, with some loose boards for a cover, as she intended to fill the box with new potatoes, from her father's farm, and send it back, by parcel post, to Mrs. Durkin, a neighbor in Mountchester who was very fond of new potatoes. So the empty box was just right for

Buddy to use as a cage for the hen he caught.

"There you are!" said Buddy again to the chicken as he put her in the box, laid the boards over the top and then put a valise on top so the boards would not slide off. "There you are! You'll soon be down on Blue Hill Farm and you can have a lot of fun with the other hens and you can lay eggs for me so I can get money to buy those skates."

Buddy made sure his chicken could not get out and then he took his seat in the auto, waiting until his father and mother should have finished their lunch. The trip to the farm would then start again. Buddy was quite pleased with himself.

"I'm glad I saw that chicken," he thought. "Nobody wanted her and it was good luck for me to catch her. I hope she lays lots of eggs."

In a short time Mr. and Mrs. Martyne came out of the restaurant and saw Buddy sitting in the auto. They knew nothing about the chicken in the box, and Buddy said nothing about her. He was going to tell, later, how he

had caught her but just then he saw a dog running along the street and the dog was such a queer one, wearing a little hat and with a pipe in his mouth, that Buddy forgot all about his chicken in looking at the dog.

“Oh, look!” he called to his father and mother. “What a funny dog! Smoking a pipe! Is he out of a circus?”

Buddy laughed at the queer sight.

Mr. Martyne looked and said:

“No, that is an advertising dog. See, he has a blanket on and he is advertising some kind of soap that is good for dogs.”

Surely enough, when the dog, with the hat on his head, with a pipe in his mouth and with a red blanket around his body came nearer, Buddy could read, on the blanket, the name of a soap which was said to be good for keeping fleas off dogs. The dog was not really smoking the pipe. It had no tobacco in it, and was just stuck in this dog’s mouth, as you might put a stick in your dog’s mouth.

“Oh, how funny!” laughed Buddy and Mr.

Martyne said it was a good advertisement. But Mrs. Martyne said:

“I think it’s a shame to make a dog go about like that with a pipe in his mouth! It isn’t right!”

“Oh, he seems to be having a good time,” spoke her husband. And, really, the dog did not seem to mind. He trotted along by himself and Buddy learned, later, that he was a trained dog whose master was not far out of sight in the crowds that followed. The dog went from place to place advertising the flea soap and was kindly treated.

But he looked very funny.

So that’s how it was that Buddy forgot about telling his parents that he had a strange chicken in the auto. And so the car started off on its journey again. The dog trotted out of sight around the corner, and Buddy was trying to imagine how many eggs his hen might lay for him when, all of a sudden, as Mr. Martyne turned down the next street there was a loud shout behind the auto.

“Something has happened!” said Mrs. Martyne.

“Maybe that dog’s hurt!” cried Buddy.

Mr. Martyne stopped the car and looked back. Running toward him was a Chinese laundryman, his blue shirt, outside his trousers, flapping in the wind. His thick-soled slippers were going clippity-clop on the pavement. In one hand he carried a flatiron. The other hand he was waving in the air and he was shouting:

“Stlop! Stlop! Alle same stlop puff-puff car! You alle same got my chicken! No can do! Gib Hip Sing back him chicken!”

“What in the world does he mean?” asked Mrs. Martyne in surprise. “We haven’t his chicken! We haven’t any chicken!”

“Oh, yes, we have a chicken,” said Buddy. “But I didn’t know it belonged to this Chinaman!”

And just then the chicken in the box at Mrs. Martyne’s feet poked her head up through a crack in the box cover and cackled!

CHAPTER VII

THE LOST COW

HA! HA!" laughed Hip Sing as he heard this. "Can do! Alle same my chicken clow! Ha! Ha!" The queer Chinese laundryman was dancing up and down in the street beside the auto which Mr. Martyne had now brought to a stop. Hip Sing's queer shoes made a funny sound on the pavement. He still held his flatiron in his hand and it must have been hot. For a man, in the crowd that began to gather, accidentally put his hand on the iron and cried:

"Ouch!"

"Buddy, what does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Martyne as he looked over from the front seat and saw the chicken in the box. "Where did you get this rooster?"

"'Tisn't a rooster," the little boy said.

"It's a hen and it can't crow like Hip Sing said it could. It just cackles."

"Well, no matter about that," Mr. Martyne answered, but he could not help smiling. "Where did you get this hen?"

"It was picking seeds out of an apple core in the gutter," said Buddy, "and I caught it. I didn't think it belonged to anybody and I was going to take it to Grandpa's farm for my own chicken so I could teach it to lay eggs and then I could sell them for money enough to buy those skates."

"Oh, my goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. Martyne. "What a queer thing to do! Please drive on, Clayton," she told her husband. "There is a big crowd gathering."

"I can't drive on until I give this Chinaman back his chicken, if it really is his," said Buddy's father. "It wouldn't be right."

"No," agreed Buddy, "it wouldn't."

"It's Hip Sing's chicken all right," piped up a boy in the crowd. "I saw you take it out of the gutter," and he pointed a finger at

Buddy. "I ran around the corner and told Hip Sing."

"Well," said Buddy, "I didn't know it was anybody's chicken or I wouldn't have taken it for mine and put it in the box."

"Of course you wouldn't!" exclaimed his mother who knew how honest and truthful Buddy was. "It was a mistake."

"Sure it was," agreed a policeman who came along just then to see what the crowd had gathered for. "I know that chicken of Hip Sing's. It's always getting out of its coop in his back yard and wandering around the street. More than once I've told him to come and get it. Go on now, Hip!" he called to the smiling laundryman, "take your hen and get back to your ironing."

"Sure! Can do! Velly glad! Ha! Ha!" murmured the Chinese. "Li'l boy no think chicken belong alle same me—he alle same nice boy—no can be bad boy! All lite! All lite! Hip Sing no mad!" and he laughed again to show that he knew it was all a mistake.

“For goodness sake give him his chicken and let’s get away from here!” begged Mrs. Martyne. She did not like to be in a crowd.

“He can have his hen back,” said Buddy stooping down to take the cover farther off the box and lift out the chicken. “I wouldn’t have taken it if I’d ’a’ known it was his. I thought it was lost.”

“Sure, anybody would!” agreed the policeman with a laugh and the crowd joined in. “There you are, Hip!” the officer went on as he took the hen from Buddy and passed it to the laundryman who cuddled the fowl in his arm as Buddy had done.

“Alle same good now!” murmured Hip Sing, nodding and smiling at Buddy. “Me no mad—me like li’l boys—like chicken—like eggs!”

“Sure!” agreed Buddy.

By this time the crowd, seeing that nothing very exciting was going on, began to melt away. Hip Sing turned back up the street with his chicken and the policeman, waving

his hand to order some small boys out of the way of the front wheels of the auto, said to Mr. Martyne:

“Well, it’s all over now and you can drive on. It’s the funniest thing I ever heard of, though, your boy picking up a chicken in the street. It’s only a wonder somebody hasn’t done it before.”

“You know Hip Sing then?” asked Mr. Martyne of the policeman.

“Oh, sure! He’s had a laundry here a good many years. He’s a nice old Chinaman. He keeps a few hens in his back yard in a coop he made of packing boxes. The hen your boy had is the only one that gets loose and wanders out in the street. I’ll have to make Hip put some chicken wire around his coop. Well, good-bye!” The officer waved his club.

“Good-bye,” said Mr. Martyne as he started the car slowly. But Buddy had a question or two to ask.

“Does Hip Sing get many eggs from his chickens?” he inquired of the officer.

"Oh, yes, I suppose so," was the answer.

"And does he sell them?" Buddy asked.

"That I couldn't say!" chuckled the policeman. "I guess he eats the eggs his chickens lay."

"I wouldn't," said Buddy. "I'd sell the eggs and get a pair of rubber wheeled roller skates."

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the policeman. "Hip Sing sure would look funny doing his ironing on roller skates! I must tell him about it! Ha! Ha!"

Amid his laughter, the auto rolled along and soon was outside the town. Mrs. Martyne made herself comfortable in her seat. Buddy put the cover neatly back on the box that was to be mailed from the farm with new potatoes for Mrs. Durkin and Mr. Martyne settled himself for the remainder of the drive to Rillglade.

It was toward the middle of the afternoon and Mr. Martyne had noticed, by a sign on the road, that they were almost at Rillglade when,

all of a sudden, there was a hissing sound under the auto which began "wobbling," as Buddy called it, and then his mother exclaimed:

"A puncture!"

"I'm afraid so!" agreed her husband putting on the brakes and steering to one side of the road. "Yes, we have a flat tire!" he said as he got out to look. "Well, it won't take long to change."

"I'll help," offered Mrs. Martyne, for she often stood near to hand her husband the wrench or other tools when he had to change a tire on the road.

So while Mr. Martyne began to jack up the car, and while his wife was unlocking the spare tire, Buddy slipped down out of the auto and wandered along the roadside, picking wild flowers. It was a pleasant, shady road in the country and, almost before he knew it, Buddy had walked back around a bend in it and could no longer see the car and his parents. But he knew just where they were—not far away.

So Buddy kept on strolling back along the road, still picking flowers and making his way toward the big, willow tree when, all of a sudden, from the bushes at one side came a crashing, trampling sound as if some large animal were breaking through.

“Oh!” exclaimed Buddy. “Maybe it’s a runaway horse!”

But it was only a big, gentle, brown-eyed cow that walked across the dry ditch between the bushes and the edge of the road—a black and white cow with a piece of rope dangling from her neck. Seeing this Buddy said:

“I know what’s the matter! You’re a lost cow! You must have broken away from where you were tied. You’re lost! I’ll take you home.”

Then Buddy began leading her, feeling quite big and important.

“Maybe, when I take this cow to the farmer who lost her, he’ll give me a glass of milk,” thought Buddy. “He’ll be glad to have her back.”

CHAPTER VIII

A BIG SURPRISE

INSTEAD of leading the cow down the road and around the turn toward the place where his father and mother were putting the spare tire on the auto, Buddy walked the other way. Just why he did this he could not have told you if you had asked him. But he remembered that a little while before the tire was punctured, the auto had driven past a roadside farm house. In a field back of the house were some cows.

“And I guess this cow belongs back there,” said Buddy to himself. “I’ll take her home and by that time Daddy and Mother will have the tire changed and we’ll go on to Grandpa’s farm.”

So, leading the lost cow, Buddy walked away from his father and mother instead of

toward them. And of course the cow could not say anything about it even if she wanted to.

It was a little while after this that, with his wife to help him, Mr. Martyne finished putting on the spare tire and then he was ready to start off again. He wiped his dusty hands on some rags, helped his wife put away the jack and other tools and then asked:

“Where is Buddy?”

“Why, isn’t he here?” asked Mrs. Martyne. “I saw him get out of the car to walk around. I guess he was tired of sitting still so long. I saw him going down the road.”

“Well, we’ll go along and catch up to him,” said her husband. “Maybe he thinks he can walk the rest of the way to Blue Hill Farm.”

“Oh, he never could do that!”

“It isn’t very far—not more than two miles—and Buddy has walked that distance more than once,” said his father. “But we’ll soon catch up to him.”

“Yes,” agreed his mother. “I guess he is

very anxious to get to the farm so he can start earning money for his skates.”

“He certainly has his heart set on those new rollers!” chuckled Mr. Martyne. “And it’s a good deal better for him to earn at least part of the money for himself than it would be for you or me to give it to him.”

“Oh, yes,” agreed Buddy’s mother. “If he works for a thing he will think a great deal more of it than if it was just given to him.”

Now it was a queer thing, but both Mr. and Mrs. Martyne thought that Buddy had walked off down the country road *toward* his grandfather’s farm, instead of *away* from it. But that last is what Buddy had done. And he was now walking *away* from the farm, leading the lost cow, while his parents were going *toward* the farm in the auto. So Buddy and his folks were getting more and more widely separated all the while. But of course they did not know that.

Mr. Martyne steered the auto around the next curve in the country road, and he was

hoping he would not run over any more tacks or nails or glass to get another puncture. Then, in a little while, he began to wonder why he did not see his little boy. Mrs. Martyne began to wonder the same thing.

"Why, I don't see Buddy!" she said, looking anxiously down the road.

"I don't either," agreed her husband. "He can't have walked this far ahead. We ought to have caught up to him by this time."

"Unless he is hiding in the bushes to tease us," suggested Mrs. Martyne.

"Yes, he might be doing that," said Buddy's father. "Then he called: 'Buddy! Buddy! Where are you? Come on out! We're in a hurry! Buddy!'"

But of course there was no answer.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. Martyne. She was beginning to feel a little worried. But her husband said:

"I think I know what happened!"

"What?" she asked.

"Buddy got a ride in another auto and is

now at Blue Hill Farm waiting for us," was the answer. "Some one picked him up as he was walking along the road and took him on to Rillglade."

"Oh, do you think so?" asked Mrs. Martyne.

"Yes, I do. We'll find him there waiting for us, and he'll say we were slow-pokes!" and Mr. Martyne laughed.

For a moment Mrs. Martyne thought this might have been the way of it and then she exclaimed:

"No, that couldn't have happened! For if an auto had come along the road we would have seen it go past us when we were changing the tire. And not an auto passed us. Buddy can't have caught a ride to the farm."

"Oh, yes he could," said Mr. Martyne. "For see," and he pointed ahead a little way. "There is a branch road coming in to this main highway and an auto could roll along there and reach this main road and we wouldn't have seen it. Some auto coming out

of the branch road picked Buddy up and took him to your father's place. We'll find him there when we arrive in a few minutes from now."

"I certainly hope so," said Mrs. Martyne. She was not quite so sure as was her husband that Buddy was on ahead.

However he was a bright little chap and often did queer things without telling anyone he was going to do them. So he might have gone on ahead to surprise his parents.

So when, a little later, Mr. and Mrs. Martyne drove up the long, grassy lane that led to Blue Hill Farm, they were eagerly looking for a sight of their little boy on the porch of the big, white farmhouse where Grandpa Addison Kendall lived.

"Well, well! Here you are! So glad to see you!" cried Grandpa Kendall as he came hurrying out. "Welcome to Blue Hill!"

"Thank you," said Mr. Martyne.

"How's mother?" asked Mrs. Martyne. "Is she better?" For she remembered that the

special delivery letter had said that Grandma Kendall was ill.

"Oh, yes, she's much better!" said her husband with a laugh. "I guess she was just lonesome for you and Buddy. As soon as she knew I had sent that special letter to have you come up here for the summer she got better all of a sudden. She's quite well now. But where's Buddy?" asked the old gentleman suddenly as he looked into the Martyne auto.

"Oh, isn't he here?" exclaimed Mrs. Martyne and she had a queer feeling around her heart. "Oh, dear!"

"Here? Why, no! I thought you were going to bring him!" exclaimed Grandpa Kendall. "Has anything happened?"

"We had a puncture!" quickly explained Mr. Martyne. "Buddy got out to walk around while I changed the tire and when we started off again he wasn't in sight. I thought he might have walked on this way and been picked up by a passing driver who came in the branch road. But if he isn't here——"

"Why, no we haven't seen him!" said Grandpa Kendall in surprise.

"Oh, dear! What can have happened to that child?" cried Grandma as she came out on the porch, having heard the talk.

"Nothing has happened to him!" said Mr. Martyne quickly. "Buddy knows how to look after himself. He must have gone down the road the other way instead of coming this way. I'll drive back and get him."

"Oh, please do! Right away!" begged Grandma. "My poor little lost Buddy!"

"He isn't lost, I'm sure!" said Mr. Martyne, but he saw a worried look on his wife's face. "I'll find him!" he said. "You go in and rest," he added. "I'll bring Buddy back in a few minutes. He must have gone the wrong way down the road, that's all."

"Oh, I hope that's all it is!" murmured Mrs. Martyne. "But I'm coming with you!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't rest until I find out what has happened to Buddy!"

"I'll come, too!" offered Grandpa Kendall.

Quickly the valises and bundles were unloaded from the auto and carried into the house where Grandma Kendall would anxiously stay until the searching party returned with the lost little boy. Then Mr. Martyne turned the auto out into the road again.

CHAPTER IX

A QUEER RIDE

WHILE Buddy's father and mother, and his grandmother and grandfather were worrying about him and wondering where he was, that same little boy was having quite a good time. He had started to lead the lost cow home, you remember, but had walked in the wrong direction—down the road away from his father's auto instead of toward it.

"Come along, lost cow!" called Buddy to the black and white animal he was leading by the rope. "I guess you'll soon be home."

"I'm a cow-boy—that's what I am!" said Buddy to himself with a little laugh as he walked along. "Course I'm not like a cow-boy in the movies, for I haven't any horse. But I have a cow just the same."

He wished he might be like one of those

brave, dashing cow-boys he had often seen on the moving picture screen, rushing here and there on a prancing pony, twirling a lasso or firing a big revolver.

“But I guess,” said Buddy to himself as he trudged along, “if I fired a revolver it would scare this cow. She lives on a quiet farm in the country, not in the wild west.”

It was farther than Buddy thought back to the house he remembered to have seen and passed as he rode in his father’s auto. But at last he saw it around a bend in the road. A large, white farmhouse it was, somewhat like Grandpa Kendall’s. And for a moment or two Buddy wished it was his grandfather’s home. For the small boy was getting tired. Still he wasn’t going to give up. He had started to take that lost cow home and he was going to finish.

Into the driveway at the side of the house Buddy turned, still leading the cow. He did not see anyone of whom he might ask questions and he began to wonder if this farm was

really the home of the lost cow. Then he heard a rattling of pans back in the kitchen of the house. The door was open and inside was a white-haired lady, almost like his grandmother, working near a stove.

“Is this your lost cow, if you please?” asked Buddy as he politely took off his cap and made a little bow, though the elderly lady in the kitchen did not see him, for she had her back turned.

“What’s that?” she exclaimed as she turned quickly around. “Do I want to buy a cow? Goodness, no! Oh, it’s a little boy! And you have a cow!” she cried, and she seemed much surprised. “Why, that is *our* cow!” she went on, coming to the door. “What are you doing with Spot?” she wanted to know. Spot seemed to be the cow’s name.

“I found her,” said Buddy.

“You found Spot?” asked the old lady with a smile. “Where?”

“Down the road,” answered Buddy and he pointed the way he had come. “We got a

puncture," he went on, "and when my father and mother were fixing it I got out of the auto and took a walk and I found this cow. I guess she broke away from where she was tied," he added, holding up the end of the rope and showing how it was frayed and raveled.

"Oh, Spot is always breaking out of her meadow!" exclaimed the old lady, coming out on the porch. "She is the worst cow we have for straying away. That's why my husband has to keep her tied. But how did you know she belonged here? You're a stranger around this part of the country I guess. I don't know you."

"I'm Buddy Martyne," he answered, "and we're going to spend the summer on my Grandpa Kendall's farm at Blue Hill."

"Oh, I know your grandfather!" said the old lady, smiling. "So that's how you happened to be here. But who told you this was our cow?"

"Nobody," Buddy answered. "But this was the nearest house so I thought maybe she

lived here—that is not exactly *lived* here,” the small boy made haste to say with a laugh, for he knew it sounded queer to speak of a cow *living* in a house. “I mean she *belonged* here; that’s what I thought,” Buddy went on. “You see we rode past here a little while ago before we got the puncture.”

“Oh, I see,” said the old lady. “Well, it was very kind of you to lead back our lost cow. Ho, Bill!” she suddenly called in a loud voice. “Come and get Spot! Buddy just brought her home. She broke loose again. Just tie her to the fence,” the old lady told Buddy, “and then I guess perhaps you would like to come in and sit down to rest and maybe have a glass of milk and a molasses cookie; would you?”

“Yes, thank you, I would,” Buddy answered. “Though I’m not so very tired. But I guess I’ll soon have to go back to my father and mother. They’ll be wondering where I am.”

“Indeed they will, if you didn’t tell them where you were going. But, if they don’t

come for you, my husband will take you to your grandfather's farm in his flivver. He'll be along soon, my husband will."

So Buddy tied Spot's rope to the fence in the drive just outside the farmhouse kitchen door and went inside, wondering who "Bill" might be. But Buddy was thinking more about the little lunch he was going to have than about "Bill."

And when he had wiped his dusty shoes with an old cloth the lady gave him, and was sitting down to the kitchen table, in front of him being a plate of molasses cookies and a glass of creamy milk, Buddy looked out of the window. He saw a big man in blue overalls leading Spot away and he guessed that "Bill" was the farmer's hired man, which was true.

So Buddy had his wish that he be given a glass of milk, though whether or not it was some of Spot's milk he did not know. Anyhow it was good and so were the cookies.

As he ate the little lunch, Buddy told something of himself and how he hoped to earn

some money on his grandfather's farm so he could buy the wonderful skates in Mr. Rudolph's store. The kind lady, whose name was Mrs. Abner Flack, listened to Buddy's story and, now and then, went to the door to look out. Buddy thought, between bites, that she might be looking to see if Spot had run away again. But Mrs. Flack said:

"I'm looking for Mr. Flack. He went to town for some groceries and I think he'll be back before long. I'll have him take you to your grandfather's farm in his flivver, Buddy."

"That will be nice," said the boy. "Thank you!"

The farm woman went to the window.

"Here he comes now!" Mrs. Flack suddenly exclaimed as the sound of wheels was heard on the drive outside. "Ho, Abner!" she called to her husband, "don't put the flivver up! You got to take Buddy home!"

"Who is Buddy?" asked a pleasant-faced grizzled and tall farmer as he stalked into the

kitchen a moment later, just as Buddy drank the last of the milk.

"Here he is!" Mrs. Flack answered and then she told about Spot breaking out of her pasture and wandering into the road where Buddy found her.

"Well, I'm glad you brought her home," said Mr. Flack. "And now, if you have finished eating, I'll take you home, or to your grandfather's farm, which, I s'pose, you'll call home during the summer."

"Yes, thank you," Buddy answered. He went out and was getting in the flivver, which was pretty well filled with groceries, when there was a whirr of wheels out in the road and the screeching of brakes as another auto came to a stop and then a voice cried:

"There's Buddy now!" It was Mr. Martyne.

"I thought we'd find him here!" chuckled Grandpa Kendall.

And here was the rescue party, arriving at the farmhouse before Buddy could start back.

"Oh, Buddy! What did you do?" cried his mother. "You worried me so!"

"I didn't mean to," Buddy said, and he was sorry. "But I found a lost cow and took her home. She lives here," he said with a wave of his hand toward the barn whither Bill had taken the runaway Spot.

"Yes, Buddy brought back my cow," said Mrs. Flack and then there was a lot of talking and everything was explained. Mrs. Martyne thanked Mrs. Flack for her kind care of Buddy and Buddy, himself, thanked the farmer's wife for the lunch of milk and cookies. And then Buddy rode back with his parents and grandfather.

Mr. Kendall had said that perhaps Buddy had wandered back along the road while the tire was being changed and had suggested that they would, very likely, find him at the Flack house, which is exactly what happened.

"But you must not do such a thing again, Buddy!" his mother warned him when they were back at Blue Hill and Grandma Kendall

was kissing her "big boy," as she called him.

"No, Mother, I won't," he promised. "But s'pose I find another lost cow? Shall I let her stay lost?"

"You come and tell me!" chuckled Grandpa Kendall. "Then you and I will go together and take her home."

"All right!" agreed Buddy. "I'll do that. I like to find lost cows."

Well, here he was on the farm at last and glad of it, too. He had had some strange adventures coming and he thought he would have more before it came time to go home in the fall, when school started again. But meanwhile Buddy was anxious to earn money to get those skates.

"As soon as I can," said Buddy to himself, while his mother and grandmother were seeing about bedrooms for the long summer's visit, "as soon as I can I'm going to ask Grandpa how I can earn some money. Maybe he'll lend me a hen or a cow and I can sell their eggs or milk."

He was very anxious to get those skates and he wanted to earn as much money toward them as he could, all by himself. But just now his grandfather and his father were busy talking so it was no time to interrupt.

Buddy knew he was going to have a very good time at Blue Hill Farm. The first thing he wanted to do was to get his "old clothes" on, as he called them, so he could romp about and play in the dirt without a thought about soiling his jacket or tearing his knickerbockers. Buddy always wore sturdy, old clothes during the summer vacations, except, of course, on Sundays.

It was late afternoon now, but not too late, Buddy thought, to start out and have some fun. So he decided he would ask his mother where his old clothes were.

"Oh, you don't want to play now; do you?" asked Mrs. Martyne, who with the help of Grandma Kendall, was opening valises.

"Please, I do!" said Buddy. "I want to see if I can find a place to earn money!"

“What’s that?” cried Grandma, and then, of course, she had to be told about the wonderful skates.

“Oh, let me get the skates for Buddy!” exclaimed the kind old lady.

“No,” said Mrs. Martyne, “thank you, Mother, but it will be best for Buddy to earn them.”

“Oh, sure! I want to earn them!” eagerly said the little fellow. “But please, give me some old, don’t-care clothes.”

His mother, with a laugh, found his sturdy suit in which he might roll down hill if he liked and soon, with a whoop of joy, Buddy was running about Blue Hill Farm. He knew the place well, for he had been there before. He knew Hank Hoke, the hired man and Maggie, the hired girl. And Buddy also knew that on other farms, not far away, lived other boys with whom he could play.

“But I’m not going to play as much as I did last year,” said Buddy as he raced along, for he had spent part of the summer before at

Blue Hill. "I'm going to earn money this year."

One of the first places Buddy visited was a brook which ran along the edge of a meadow, not far from the house. Buddy knew that watercress grew in this ditch and his father was fond of this spicy plant.

"I'll get some for him," thought Buddy. "I don't mean to sell them to him, though," he quickly added. "But maybe I could make money if I sold watercress to some other folks. But I'll give some to my father for nothing."

Soon he was at the brook. On the bank, near where the cress grew thick and green, was a long heavy plank and Buddy, seeing it, cried:

"Oh, I'll make a boat! What fun!"

It did not take long to push the plank into the water and then Buddy got on this "boat," as he called it, though, really, it was only a raft. He got a long tree branch for a pole and began pushing himself about in the water which wasn't very deep.

“Hi! This is fun!” cried Buddy. “I’m a sailor!”

For some time he poled himself about, forgetting all about the watercress. Then, suddenly, as he pushed himself close to one bank, he was surprised by hearing a loud snorting noise.

“Oh!” cried Buddy. “Oh, what’s that?”

But he need not have been afraid, for it was only one of his grandfather’s horses that had come down to the brook to get a drink.

“Hello, Prince!” called Buddy for he had a friendly feeling for all animals. “Hello, horse!”

Prince snorted again and bent his head down to get a drink. Buddy poled his raft closer to watch the horse suck up the water in his velvet lips. When he had taken enough, Prince raised his head and started back toward the middle of the pasture where he had been feeding. But a very strange thing happened.

A long rope, dangling from the halter of the

horse, caught on the rough edge of Buddy's plank-raft and, a moment later, as the horse walked off, he pulled the little boy and his boat right out of the brook and began dragging them along on the grass. The sudden jerk on the plank made Buddy sit down rather hard, but did not hurt him.

“Oh! Oh!” he cried in wonderment.
“What a queer ride I'm having!”

CHAPTER X

UNDER THE BARN

INDEED Buddy was having a strange ride. Prince, the old horse of Blue Hill Farm, who was often turned out to pasture when he did not have to pull a wagon or a plow, was quite surprised, at first, when he felt something dragging at his halter after he had taken a drink at the brook. But Prince did not get frightened and run away.

Prince was such a steady old horse that nothing much frightened him. So when he felt that dragging weight on his halter and rope he just looked around. He saw Buddy sitting on the plank that had lately been a raft. Then Prince must have thought he was pulling the "stone-boat" for Grandpa Kendall as he had often done before.

Buddy knew what a stone-boat was but per-

haps you don't, unless you have lived on a farm, so I will explain.

There are, on most farms, more stones than a farmer knows what to do with. Sometimes he makes a fence of them. Small stones are easily tossed into a wagon and hauled to the edge of the field. But it is hard to lift large rocks so a stone-boat is used to get them out of the way.

A stone-boat is a sort of land raft made of heavy planks nailed together. It is easy to roll, or push, even a large stone on this land raft and then a horse is hitched to it and the big rock is pulled to the edge of the field or perhaps dumped into some hole or deep gully. A stone-boat isn't as easy to pull as is a wagon, for a wagon has wheels which roll easily on the ground. A stone-boat has to be dragged and Prince often found it hard pulling.

But now, if he looked back and thought Buddy was a rock on the stone-boat that had lately been a floating raft, why Prince must have thought that it was easier to pull than

usual. For Buddy was not very heavy, and the single plank was lighter than the big stone-boat Grandpa Kendall had made.

“Gid-dap!” cried Buddy, sitting on the plank and riding along. “Gee! This is fun! I never thought I’d have a ride like this!”

The rope fastened to the halter of Prince was caught fast in a crack of the plank, and the rope was so short, and Prince was so high, that the front end of Buddy’s land boat was raised a little off the ground. For this reason it did not catch in the tangled grass or dig into the earth, nor strike against stones. It was almost like a sled except that there was no snow on the ground.

“Tomorrow,” said Buddy to himself with a laugh as Prince dragged him along over the grass, “I’m going to make a bigger thing like this and I’ll have some fine rides. Maybe,” he said, eagerly, “I can take some of the other fellows around here for a ride and charge them a penny. I’ll make money that way!”

It was a great idea, Buddy thought. But he

soon forgot about it in the fun he was having by being given such a fine, queer ride. It was even more fun than poling himself around the brook on the plank raft.

“Gid-dap! Go faster!” cried Buddy and Prince did so. The plank crushed down the grass and weeds of the pasture and left quite a track or trail. It was almost like the wake left by boats when they go through the water.

Buddy was having a very good time.

Then Prince swung about so suddenly that Buddy almost fell off the plank as it turned. However a fall would not hurt him for he was only about two inches above the grass.

“What’s the matter?” Buddy wanted to know, asking this question almost as if Prince could answer. And in another moment the little boy saw what it was. His father and grandfather were coming toward the pasture fence. And Prince knew that often Grandpa Kendall gave him a lump of sugar or a lump of salt. Prince liked both. Sometimes he would rather have salt than sugar. Many animals,

such as horses, cows and sheep like salt very much.

So, seeing his master near the fence, Prince turned that way. And of course, when the horse turned, he swung Buddy's plank about, nearly upsetting him.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Grandpa Kendall when he saw the queer sight. "Look at that!"

"My goodness!" said Mr. Martyne when he saw how Buddy was being pulled along. "He'll be hurt!"

"Oh, no, he isn't in any danger!" said Mr. Kendall. "Prince is very gentle. But I don't see how Buddy caught him!"

"I didn't catch him! He caught me!" cried Buddy as he was pulled close to the fence near which his father and grandfather now stood. "I was playing raft and Prince came to get a drink."

By this time Prince had stopped to get the lump of sugar which Grandpa Kendall held out for him, so Buddy's ride was at an end. He got off the raft, or land boat, whichever

you want to call it, and told what had happened.

"You certainly have had a busy day!" chuckled his father.

"I'll have more fun tomorrow!" said Buddy. "Do you want a ride, Daddy?" he asked, for the rope was still fast to the plank.

"Thank you, no!" laughed Mr. Martyne. "And I guess you've had enough. Prince wants a rest."

So the old horse was allowed to go back to his pasture without dragging the plank, which was loosed from the halter rope. Prince had been tied under a tree but, like the lost cow, had broken loose to wander about.

Buddy slept well that night and was up early the next morning ready for more adventures. He was glad his grandmother wasn't ill, as at first he had feared she might be after that special delivery letter came.

"For if Grandma was sick," said Buddy to his mother before he ran out to play, "maybe we wouldn't have such good things to eat.

She always has to tell Maggie what to cook; doesn't she?"

"Oh, what a boy you are!" laughed Mrs. Martyne. "Glad Grandma isn't sick because you want good things to eat! Dear me!"

"Oh, of course I don't want Grandma to be sick, anyhow," Buddy said. "But it's nice to have good things to eat!"

Buddy had come to Blue Hill Farm to play but he also wanted to earn money if he could. So, when he saw his grandfather walking toward the barn, after breakfast, Buddy followed and, when the old gentleman turned to see who was behind him, the little boy asked:

"Have you any chores you want me to do?"

"Chores?" exclaimed Mr. Kendall in some surprise.

"Yes," Buddy answered. "Daddy said maybe I could earn some money on the farm doing chores, and if you have any that need doing now I could do them before I play. You see I want money for a new kind of roller skates, with rubber wheels."

“Oh, yes,” said Grandpa. “Well, let me see, now. There ought to be plenty of chores for a boy like you. But how much do you charge?” he asked, and he seemed to be very serious.

Buddy thought for a moment. He had often been given one or two cents for running errands not only for his mother’s girl, Lola, but for the neighbors. But would it be right to charge Grandpa Kendall full price? Buddy wasn’t sure. Blue Hill Farm was such a fine place to spend the summer that it seemed, almost, as if he ought to pay for staying there instead of being paid for a little work. So Buddy asked:

“Would a penny a chore be too much? If it is, I could do two chores for one penny.”

“Oh,” said Grandpa, still as if he were very serious, “I guess I could pay a penny a chore.”

“All right!” exclaimed Buddy. “What is the first one you want me to do?”

Grandpa thought a moment and then said:

"Would you like to turn the grindstone while I sharpen my axe?"

"I'd love to!" said Buddy. "Would that be a chore?"

"Yes, and a good one," answered Grandpa.

Soon Buddy was making the big stone whirl around by turning the handle. Above it water dripped from a tin can with a hole in and, sitting on one end of the frame in which the stone was fastened, Mr. Kendall made the sparks fly as he ground the axe. It wasn't easy work and pretty soon Buddy's back began to ache, but he would not give up and after a while the axe was sharp enough for cutting wood.

"Well, that's one chore done," said the old gentleman with a twinkle in his eyes as he looked down at Buddy. "Do you want to be paid by the chore or by the week?"

Buddy thought about this a moment or two.

"I think," he said slowly, "that I'd like to be paid by the week. You can keep track of it. I can't buy those skates until we go back home in September and, besides, if I get paid by the

week it will seem like more money than just getting a penny each time."

"Yes," said Mr. Kendall, "perhaps it will. Well, then, I now owe you a penny," and he made a note of it in a little black book he took from the hip pocket of his trousers.

"Are there any more chores?" asked Buddy anxiously.

"Not right away. You'd better play for a while," his grandfather told him. Buddy was quite ready to do this as turning the grindstone was rather hard. So he hurried off, hoping he might see some other boys with whom he could have fun.

As Buddy walked along the side of the barn he saw a hen fluttering under the building at a place where there was a hole beneath one of the big beams.

"Oh, ho!" said Buddy to himself. "There's a hen going to a hidden nest to lay eggs! I'll crawl under and find out where she lays and I'll get the eggs for Grandma and maybe I'll earn another penny!"

Buddy knew that the hens were supposed to lay their eggs in the regular coops, but often the fowls stole away to lay in secret and sometimes their nests were never found. Each secret nest found meant so many more eggs.

“I’ll find out where she’s laying!” said Buddy and in another moment he was crawling under the barn after the brown hen. He was to have quite an adventure there, too!

CHAPTER XI

LOST IN THE CORN

WIGGLING on his stomach like a funny little fat, red-haired and blue-eyed alligator, Buddy crawled under the barn after the brown hen that was stealing away to lay her eggs in a secret nest.

“Won’t Grandma be surprised when I take her in a whole hat full of eggs?” Buddy asked himself as he wiggled along. “She sure will!” Then he added: “Oh, gee! But I haven’t any hat to put the eggs in!” For he had run out bareheaded after breakfast. Buddy never wore a hat in summer. That is why he had such a fine, brown color, like tan shoes.

“Oh, well,” he said with a little laugh, “I can put the eggs in my pockets, and if there are too many I can come back for ’em.”

It was dark and dusty under the barn, and

at first Buddy could not see very well. The floor and beams of the barn were close over his head, and the ground, along which he was crawling, was covered with bits of hay and straw that had sifted down through cracks in the barn floor.

"I don't see that hen," murmured Buddy as he stopped a moment to rest. "I wonder if she's in here? Maybe she went right on through and came out the other side of the barn."

He could see a little better now, for his eyes were getting used to the half darkness beneath the barn. And as he lay down flat and stretched out, for his arms and legs ached from wiggling and crawling, he thought he saw something moving a little way ahead of him. Then he saw the dim, shadowy form of the hen, settling down on her nest.

"Oh, here she is!" exclaimed Buddy. "I've got her!"

Well, of course he didn't exactly have that hen in his arm as he had the one that belonged

to Hip Sing the Chinese laundryman. But Buddy knew he had at last found the secret nest of the brown chicken.

“I guess I’ll wiggle up and see how many eggs she’s got,” thought Buddy. “Maybe there’s a dozen and Grandma might give me five cents. That would be great. Then I’d have—let me see—” he tried to figure how much he had in his bank at home, and count in the penny Grandpa was to give him for turning the grindstone and to that he wanted to add five cents which he might get if the secret nest had a dozen eggs in.

But this was quite too much number-work for a small boy in a dark little hole, almost like a tunnel, under the barn, so Buddy gave it up and said:

“I guess I’d better see how many eggs there are before I ask Grandma how much she’ll give me for them.”

He wiggled on again, drawing nearer and nearer to the hen. She was quiet now and did not seem to pay any heed to Buddy. But

when he got quite close to her, so he could reach out and put his hand on her smooth feathers, she gave a surprised cluck and ruffled herself up, the plumage around her neck making quite a fluffy ring.

“Oh, gosh!” exclaimed Buddy. “Don’t be scared! I’m not going to hurt you!”

Now of course the hen couldn’t understand what Buddy was saying, and she didn’t know he was a kind little boy who never hurt animals. But no hen likes to be fussed with, or handled, when she is getting ready to lay an egg, so this one suddenly turned her head half around and darted her beak at Buddy.

“Ouch!” he cried as he felt a sharp pain on the back of his hand which he pulled quickly away. “Ouch!” cried Buddy.

“Cluck! Cluck!” went the hen as if saying: “Don’t touch me again!”

But Buddy was a brave little chap and he wasn’t going to give up so easily.

“Please keep still, fussy old hen, until I see how many eggs you have under you,” he said.

He moved his hand forward again, intending to slip it under the chicken, but she made such a funny noise, and again darted her beak so quickly at him, that Buddy pulled back his hand in a hurry. He didn't get picked this time, but he didn't like that hen.

"Oh, keep your old eggs!" he said. "I know what I'll do. I'll come back after you get off the nest and count 'em then. I know where your nest is now, anyhow."

Buddy thought this was a wise thing to do so he started to get out of the hole under the barn. It was so narrow, like a long, low tunnel, as I have told you, that he could not turn around and crawl out frontward. The only way was to crawl out backward. It wasn't the first time Buddy had to do something like this. Once, when playing hide and go seek, he had crawled under the stoop at home and he had to back out just as he was doing now.

"Anyhow, I know where her nest is," said Buddy to himself

For a few feet he had no trouble in crawling

and wiggling backward, but pretty soon, all of a sudden, he found himself stuck. He could not move. Something seemed to have hold of him about the middle of his blouse, for he wore no coat, the day being warm.

“Oh,” cried Buddy! “I’m caught!”

And he was! He was held fast there under the barn. He tried to push himself back but could not. Then he tried to crawl ahead but he could not do this, either. For a moment he thought perhaps the hen might have gotten off her nest and have tangled her beak in his blouse. But he could look ahead and see the chicken still on her eggs. She seemed to be going to sleep.

“I guess I’m caught on a nail or something that sticks down through the barn floor!” said Buddy, and, for a wonder, he had guessed right. A long nail was caught in his blouse at the back in such a way that he could not move ahead or back. Of course if he pushed hard enough he might tear himself loose, but he did not want to do that and rip his blouse.

He tried to reach up with his hand to gently pull his blouse away from the nail but could not do it, and then he decided he had better call for help. He shouted loudly:

“Help! Help! Come and get me out! I’m stuck!”

To his surprise a voice answered him almost at once. And the voice came from right over his head.

“Who are you and where are you?” the voice asked.

“I’m Buddy and I’m under the barn!” the little boy answered. “I crawled in to find a hen’s nest but I’m stuck on a nail!”

There was a tramping of feet over his head and some more pieces of straw and hay sifted down through the cracks in the barn floor and settled down on Buddy’s neck.

“Keep quiet! I’ll get you out in a minute!” said the voice and then Buddy knew it was Hank Hoke, his grandfather’s hired man.

“I don’t believe you can crawl in here and get me out,” said Buddy remembering how

big Hank was. "You'd be stuck, too. I'm caught on a nail."

"I'm not going to try to crawl in as you did!" laughed Hank. "I know a better way."

There was a noise of boards being moved over Buddy's head and, all at once, the tunnel under the barn was made very light. The hired man had lifted up a loose floor board just over where Buddy was caught. Reaching his hand in, Hank loosened the little boy's blouse from the nail and then, when another board was lifted out of the way, Buddy could scramble up and out. He found himself inside the big barn.

"What were you doing under there?" asked the hired man.

He was laughing now.

"Looking for a hen that had a secret nest," explained Buddy. "And I found her! She's right close here. If you lift up the next board you can see her."

Hank did this and he and Buddy looked down on the hen who was still on her nest.

Buddy could not see how many eggs she had beneath her feathers.

“When she goes off I’ll get the eggs and take them to my grandmother,” Buddy said, though he did not speak about the chance of getting five cents.

“Oh, I don’t believe I’d bother with those eggs if I were you,” said Hank Hoke.

“Why not?” asked Buddy.

“Because,” answered the hired man, “I think that hen has been trying to hatch them a long time. They’d be spoiled for eating, those eggs would. And she may bring out some little chickens in about a week. She’s been keeping this nest secret a long time, this hen has.”

And so it proved, for later, when the brown hen was seen coming out of the barn, Buddy and the hired man went back in and looked down through the floor. The eggs were quite old. A week later the brown hen had ten little downy, yellow chickens.

But if Buddy did not earn five cents by taking in any eggs from that secret nest, he was

lucky enough to find another, a few days later, This was back of the pig pen and had five fresh eggs in, and when the little boy took them to his grandmother she gave him a penny for each one. For she said if he had not found them the hen that laid them might have hatched out more little chickens.

“And we have enough chickens now,” said Grandma. “What we need most are eggs. How much have you toward your skates now, Buddy?”

Buddy did some number-work on a piece of paper and then said:

“I have a dollar and twenty-four cents. I need three dollars and seventy-six cents more. I hope I get it before September.”

“Oh, I think you will,” his grandmother said.

For two or three days after that Buddy played about the farm, now and then doing a chore for his grandfather and earning a few more pennies. But the five dollars seemed a long way off. However the summer was also

long. Buddy found some other boys he knew from farms on either side of Blue Hill and had fun with them. They went swimming in the brook, made a raft that would hold three of them and started on a voyage like that of Columbus. However they were not as lucky as was Columbus, and found no new lands.

The raft upset and all three slid into the water. But it wasn't deep and they had on old clothes so they didn't mind. It was so warm that falling in the water made them cool.

Then, about a week after he had come to Blue Hill Farm, Buddy had a strange adventure that really was the start of giving him the biggest lift toward getting his wonderful skates.

On the farm south of Blue Hill lived Dick Taylor, with whom, one day, Buddy had planned to go fishing. With his pole and line and bait Buddy started, one morning, to go to Dick's house and from there the two boys would go to a small river, or creek, for their sport.

Buddy decided to take a short cut to Dick's house by going through Grandpa Kendall's field of corn. Now this was a large field and the corn was very tall, higher than Buddy's head. But it was easy walking between the rows of corn hills and would save half a mile of walk down the road.

"I'll pretend the corn field is a bamboo jungle," said Buddy to himself as he climbed over the fence and started off. "It looks like the moving pictures of a jungle," went on the little fellow as he saw the corn stalks towering over his head.

On and on he walked. He thought he was going in a straight line through the field so that he would come out, at the other side, close to Dick's house. But after he had been walking for some time Buddy could not see the end of the corn field. The long rows seemed to stretch out for miles and miles.

"Maybe I am going the wrong way," said Buddy. "I'll turn off to one side."

So he did this and walked and walked, but

seemed to get nowhere. Then he made another turn, which was a wrong thing to do for now he was very much mixed up. At last he felt so tired that he sat down to rest on a big rock in the midst of the tall corn. And then, with a sigh, Buddy said:

“I guess I’m lost!”

And that’s just what he was—lost in the tall corn!

CHAPTER XII

BUDDY'S PUMPKIN

THIS was not the first time Buddy Martyne had been lost. Once, when he was quite a little chap, he had wandered away from home into streets that he had never seen before. There was so much to look at, and so many things in the store windows, that Buddy wandered on and on until he was very tired. Then he sat down to rest. But when he started to go back home he could not find his way. A kind policeman took his hand and led him to the station-house where there were more nice officers.

Buddy thought it was fun.

By that time Buddy's mother had missed him, and, knowing that the police often find lost children, she telephoned to the station-house, and there, surely enough, was Buddy.

How glad he was to see his mother! And how glad his mother was to see him!

Another time Buddy, with Tom Gordon and Harry Clee went off in the woods to find chestnuts. It was too early in the year for the brown nuts to drop off the trees, but the boys, who were small, did not know that. So they went into the deep forest and became lost.

But they were not afraid. In fact they thought it was a lot of fun and they said among themselves that they would stay out all night and make a camp fire and live like the Indians. That was until Buddy asked:

“But what are we going to do for something to eat? Even the Indians eat.”

“We’ll eat chestnuts!” said Tom.

“But we haven’t found any!” said Harry.

Then the three little boys didn’t think it was such fun to be lost in the woods. And they had no matches to make a camp fire which, after all, was a good thing. For unless you are careful, and know just how, it is dangerous to make a camp fire in the woods.

Then the boys began to call for help and as it grew darker and darker they called louder and louder. Until, after a while, Mr. Martyne and Mr. Clee, who had started out to look for the lost boys, heard their cries and found them.

“And now,” said Buddy to himself as he sat down on the big rock in the field of tall corn, “now I am lost again. But I’m not afraid.”

Of course he wasn’t afraid! Why should he be? He knew he was on a farm—his own grandfather’s Blue Hill Farm, and though he might be quite a distance from the house, still he thought he could find his way back again after he had rested.

“The only thing is, though,” said Buddy to himself, “I’ll be late for going fishing with Dick. Maybe he won’t wait for me. I guess I’d better hurry and try to find my way out of here.”

So, after he had sat on the rock a little longer, Buddy got up and started off again with his fish pole.

"Let me see, now," murmured Buddy to himself. "When I started out I was walking with the sun at my back. And now the sun is shining in my face. I must have turned myself around. So if I walk with the sun at my back I ought to come out on the other side of this field and get to Dick's house."

This might have been all right if Buddy had kept going in a straight line. But, as many other lost boys have done, Buddy began to turn and walk in a circle. Even with the rows of straight corn, like the aisles of school desks to guide him, Buddy swung around in a circle until he was all mixed up.

"If this corn wasn't so high I could see over it and then I would know which way to go," said Buddy. "But it's very high corn."

Indeed it was! The field was Grandpa Kendall's best corn land and the old gentleman farmer was very proud of how tall it had grown. Even a big man would have had trouble seeing over the tops of those corn stalks and Buddy was far from being a big man.

Suddenly, as he walked along through the corn rows, Buddy saw, just ahead of him, many large, round, yellow things.

“Footballs!” cried Buddy. “What a lot of footballs!”

But when he hurried a little nearer he saw that they were yellow pumpkins growing amid the corn. Buddy sat down on a large one and felt tired again.

“Oh, dear!” he said. “I guess I’m never going to get out of this pumpkin and corn field!”

But still he wasn’t going to give up trying.

“If these had been footballs,” said Buddy to himself, “I could have kicked one around and maybe it would have rolled to the edge of the field and then I wouldn’t be lost any more. Maybe!”

But the pumpkins weren’t footballs. There were quite a lot of them, glowing yellow amid the corn. Grandpa Kendall raised pumpkins for his cows.

Suddenly Buddy had a new thought as he

sat on the big, yellow pumpkin, which would be much yellower and bigger before Thanksgiving, when, if you are lucky, you may have a pumpkin pie.

"I know what I've got to do!" exclaimed the little boy. "I got to holler and yell, same as Tom and Harry and I did when we were lost that time we went after chestnuts."

No sooner thought of than done. Buddy began to shout.

"Hi! Yi! I'm lost!" he cried as loudly as he could. "Come and get me out of this corn! I'm lost!"

Buddy did not care who heard him. He knew that somewhere along one side of the cornfield was a road and perhaps someone, driving along this in an auto, might hear him and come to his help.

"And maybe Daddy or Mother or Grandpa will hear me," thought Buddy. "And maybe Dick will," he added for he had started for Dick's house and he might be nearer to it than to the home of his grandfather.

Buddy shouted again and then waited. No one answered and the small boy was beginning to feel quite lonesome. Then he shouted again, and, to his delight, he heard a voice in answer. The voice seemed a long way off, though, for the corn field was very large.

“Come and get me!” shouted Buddy. And then he heard his grandfather’s voice coming nearer and saying:

“Stay where you are, Buddy! I’ll come and get you. But call out again, about every half minute, so I can tell where you are by your voice.”

So Buddy began to call:

“Here I am! Over this way!”

He did not exactly know how long a half minute was, without a clock to look at, but he guessed at it pretty well and kept on shouting again and again. It was almost like a game, he thought.

“I’m lost and grandpa is trying to find me!” said Buddy to himself and he laughed a little now, for he wasn’t a bit afraid. It wasn’t such

a very terrible adventure to be lost in a cornfield when the sun was shining. At night, though—well, that would be different.

“Shout again, Buddy!” called his grandfather. “Where are you?”

“Here I am!” yelled the little boy and he knew, by his grandfather’s voice, that the old gentleman was quite near, now. In less than a minute Mr. Kendall exclaimed:

“I see you!”

“Yes, and I see you!” laughed Buddy and he saw the corn waving off to one side and then his grandfather came into view.

“It’s lucky I came over here to see how my pumpkins were growing or you might have been wandering around half the day!” said Mr. Kendall with a laugh as he patted Buddy on the shoulder. “Were you much frightened?”

“No, thank you,” Buddy answered. “Not much. I didn’t think this cornfield was so big or the corn so tall.”

“It’s the best corn in Cardiff county!” ex-

claimed the old gentleman farmer proudly, "and I'm going to have the best pumpkins, too! And come to think of it, Buddy, it's a very lucky thing you got lost here."

"Lucky!" murmured Buddy. "What do you mean, Grandpa?" For he was thinking it was quite unlucky that he would be late in going fishing with Dick. "Lucky!"

"Yes," went on Mr. Kendall, "it's very lucky. For, Buddy, I have just thought of a way for you to get the rest of the money you need for your new roller skates."

"You have?" cried Buddy in delight. "How can I get money, Grandpa?"

"Out of that pumpkin!" said the old farmer, pointing to the one on which Buddy sat. "That is going to be your pumpkin. Out of it you can get money for your skates!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIG FISH

BUDDY leaned over and looked down between his legs, at the golden yellow pumpkin on which he was sitting. He wondered what his grandfather was talking about. Money come out of a pumpkin? How could it?

This seemed very strange.

Of course Buddy remembered the story of Cinderella, and how the fairy godmother turned a pumpkin into a golden coach. And of course a coach has wheels, and there are wheels on roller skates—but then that was a fairy story and Buddy didn't believe in fairies. Except, maybe, when he saw Peter Pan in the movies and then, like all the other boys and girls, he had said he believed in fairies so Tinker Bell wouldn't die. But this was different.

"I don't see how money can come out of a pumpkin, Grandpa," said Buddy.

"Don't you?" asked the old gentleman farmer and he smiled. "Don't you, Buddy?"

"No, thank you," answered the little boy, "I don't. I'm much obliged to you for finding me when I'm lost, but I don't see how I can get money for my skates out of this pumpkin. I guess I'd better do chores and look for eggs and things like that."

"Well, that's a good way, too," said Grandpa. "But my way is a little easier. Though there is no way, that I know of, to earn money easily. It is all hard work, and if you want to get money out of this pumpkin for your skates, Buddy, you will need to do a little hard work."

"Oh, I wouldn't mind that!" said Buddy, cheerfully. "I like work."

"I know you do, Buddy, and I'm glad of it. It is a good thing to work in this world. Not too hard, of course. Boys and men and women and girls must have a little fun along with

their work. And if you do as I tell you I think you will have some fun with your work."

"But what kind of work?" Buddy wanted to know. "And how can I get money out of this pumpkin?"

"By showing it at the County Fair and, if you are lucky, taking a prize," said the old gentleman farmer. "My pumpkins are the biggest of any grown around here. That is they always have been and I guess it will be the same this year. This land is very good for growing pumpkins and corn. Now this is what you must do.

"You must watch this prize pumpkin of yours carefully. Come over here once a week and see that there aren't any weeds growing around it to keep it from getting very big. If the weather gets too dry you must bring water over here in a pail. You can bring it along the road in a cart. This edge of the field is near the road."

"Then I wasn't so much lost as I thought I was," said Buddy with a laugh.

"No, not so much. The corn is so high that, even if you are only a few rows in the field you can't see the road."

"I'll take good care of this pumpkin," promised Buddy. "But who will give me a prize for it?"

"This is what will happen if you are lucky," explained Grandpa Kendall. "Every year there is held, in Greenpoint, the Cardiff County Fair. All the farmers around here take their best pigs, cows, horses and the things they raise on their farms to show them at the Fair. There are prizes for the fattest pig, for the best cow, for the fastest running horse, for the biggest ears of corn and for the largest pumpkin. Last year and the year before I got a prize for the largest pumpkin."

"How much was the prize?" asked Buddy.

"Five dollars."

"Oh, if I got that," said Buddy, "I would have enough money for my skates and I wouldn't need to take what I have saved in my bank."

“Well, the first prize is five dollars,” said Grandpa Kendall. “Then there is a second prize of three dollars for the second biggest and best pumpkin. This year somebody might beat my pumpkins and then you, or I would only get second prize. But that is three dollars and if you got that, with what you have already saved up, and by earning a little more you would have enough for your skates; wouldn’t you?”

“Oh, yes, thank you,” Buddy answered. “I hope I can win first prize, though.”

“That’s right! Try for the best!” said Mr. Kendall. “You’re now sitting on the largest pumpkin in my corn field, Buddy. If you take care of it—water it and keep the weeds away—there is no reason why it will not grow to be the biggest one in Cardiff County. Then you will get first prize.”

“I’m going to try!” exclaimed Buddy, getting up off the big, yellow vegetable to look at it all around. It was larger than he had thought. “But Grandpa,” he said, “don’t you

want to try for the prize yourself? It's your pumpkin."

"I'll give it to you," offered the old gentleman farmer. "I have had my share of prizes. Now it's your turn. But, Buddy, it will not be easy."

"I don't care if it's hard—I'll do it!" exclaimed the boy.

"That's the way to talk!" cried Grandpa Kendall. "You see," he went on, "they also raise pumpkins on the farms next to mine. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Armstrong take their biggest pumpkins to the County Fair and some years they get first prize. But I beat them last year and the year before."

"Then," said Buddy with a little sigh, "if you got the first prize this year at the fair, or if I did, that would be three times in a row."

"Sure!" laughed Grandpa. "Tit, tat, toe! Three in a row! I've never done it, but there is no reason why it can't be done," he said. "I never paid any special heed to my pumpkins. That is I never carried water to them and I

only cleared out the weeds when I cultivated the corn, or hoed it. But if you will give a big pumpkin, like yours here, Buddy, some special care there's no telling how big it will grow."

"I'll do it!" cried the little boy, his blue eyes shining and his reddish hair sticking up all over his head as he ran his fingers through it. "I'll do it!" He jumped up in the air and cracked his heels like Uncle Henry. "I'll do it! Hurray!"

"Hurray!" cried Grandpa Kendall and he cracked his heels twice. Oh, he was a spry old gentleman farmer let me tell you!

"Do you think Mr. Taylor and Mr. Armstrong will try to get prizes for pumpkins this year?" asked Buddy as he patted the fat, yellow sides of his big vegetable.

"They might. And if Dick Taylor and Ted Armstrong hear, Buddy, that you are going to enter a pumpkin at the Cardiff County Fair for a prize, they may pick out big ones on their fathers' farms to look after and water just as you do."

"I don't care," said Buddy. "I think it would be fun if we three boys would all try for the prize. But I hope I win it," he added.

"That's the way to talk! I suppose Dick and Ted will think the same," spoke Mr. Kendall. "Well, that's what I meant when I said that you could get money for your skates out of a pumpkin. Do you understand now?"

"Oh, yes, thank you," Buddy answered. "And I'm going to tell Dick about it when I go fishing with him. I'll tell Ted, too. We'll all try for the pumpkin prize. Should I give mine any water now?" he asked, anxiously.

"No," said Grandpa, "the ground isn't dry enough yet. But it may be in a week. Now I'll just mark this pumpkin as yours." Taking out his knife he cut Buddy's name in big letters on the side of the yellow globe as it lay on the ground amid the corn. "There you are!"

The little boy looked at his name—BUDDY.

"Won't cutting the letters on it hurt the pumpkin?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said Grandpa. "Pumpkins are very tough. Now I'd better show you how to get to the road and, after this, don't get lost in the corn."

"I won't," Buddy promised. "And I'll make a mark on the fence so I'll know where to turn in to water my pumpkin when the ground gets dry."

Grandpa Kendall thrust a long stick into a hill of corn near the big vegetable as a signal post and then he led Buddy toward the fence, pointing out some big stones in the ground which he told the little boy to look at, and remember, as they would be marks by which he could find his way into the field again.

"I'll know how to find my way now," said Buddy.

A little later he was at Dick's house ready to go fishing.

"I thought you were never coming!" complained Dick.

"I got lost in the corn," explained Buddy. "And I sat on a big pumpkin," he added.

"Maybe it will take a prize and I'll have money enough to get my skates. Are you going to try for a pumpkin prize at the County Fair, Dick? I think it would be fun if you did and if Ted did."

"I will if Ted does," decided Dick. "Let's go find him. He can come fishing with us."

"We'll have fun!" said Buddy.

Buddy, Dick and Ted were always chums in the summer when Buddy came to his grandfather's farm and the three boys were soon talking excitedly about prize pumpkins as they hurried along the road toward the fishing hole. They were going to be friendly rivals, each one hoping he would win first prize. But, at the same time, they would be kind about it, and help one another.

"Your grandfather always has big pumpkins," said Ted Armstrong to Buddy. "But this year we have some whoppers on our farm."

"So have we!" added Dick.

Buddy began to think that it wasn't going

to be as easy as he had at first imagined to win a prize. But he would do his very best.

Soon the three boys were sitting in the shade on the bank of the creek, having baited their hooks and cast them into the water.

“Let’s see who’ll get the first bite!” whispered Buddy. None of them talked loudly for fear of frightening the fish away.

After a while, during which each one had carefully lifted up his hook more than once, thinking he felt a nibble, all of a sudden Buddy gave a start and exclaimed in a loud whisper:

“Oh, I’ve got a whopper! I’ve got a big fish!”

The end of his pole bent and his line straightened out as he began to pull up. The other boys watched him eagerly.

“What a big fish!” murmured Buddy. “Oh, boy!”

CHAPTER XIV

DOWN IN A HOLE

WITH all his might Buddy lifted his pole up higher and higher. He had jumped to his feet so he might not slip off the bank and was moving away from the edge. If he fell in the creek the big fish might get away.

“Pull him in, Buddy! Pull him in!” cried Dick.

“Want me to help you get him?” asked Ted.

“Thanks—no—I guess I can land—him!” panted Buddy.

He could feel the line coming up, now. He was glad he had a strong bamboo pole and a stout cord. He hoped neither would break.

Higher and higher the line came up, sparkling in the sun. There were widening circles in the muddy water of the creek where, it

seemed, soon the big fish would break into view. Ted and Dick had forgotten about their lines in the excitement of watching Buddy.

Suddenly the boys saw something coming into the air out of the water.

"It's a big, black fish!" cried Ted.

"A sock-dolloger!" yelled Dick, that being the country boys' name for an extra large fish.

"Look out your pole doesn't break!" warned Ted.

"I—I'm afraid it's going to crack!" panted Buddy who was breathing hard and fast. He had never before had such a big bite as this seemed to be.

Then all of a sudden, as more of the black object came into view out of the water, Ted gave a shout of laughter and cried:

"It's only an old boot!"

"A big rubber boot!" added Dick.

"And full of water!" said Buddy as, in disappointment, he saw what he had caught. "No wonder it was heavy to pull up!" Oh, boy!"

The old rubber boot, on which his hook had

caught instead of in a fish, was above the surface of the creek now, and water was spurting from many holes in the foot.

“Ha! Ha! What are you going to land it for?” asked Dick as he saw that Buddy kept on pulling in his pole and line.

“Chuck it back in!” advised Ted. “Jiggle your pole and maybe the boot will drop off.”

“No,” answered Buddy. “If I do that and it falls back in the creek, I may get it on my hook again, or you two fellows will, and that won’t be any fun. We want fish, not rubber boots!”

“That’s right!” agreed Ted. “Fried fish are good to eat but not fried rubber boots.”

“They’re too tough!” said Dick, laughing.

“I’ll say they are!” cried Ted.

As the water ran out of the holes in the boot that Buddy had caught in place of a fish, the weight on the pole and line became less, so that the bamboo no longer bent like a bow. And soon Buddy was able to toss the boot back of him on the grass, though in doing so he show-

ered himself and his chums with drops of water.

“There!” exclaimed Buddy as he took the boot off his hook and threw it far away in the bushes. “Nobody else will get it on their hook again. Now we’ll catch fish!” he told the other boys.

Ted had the next luck, after Buddy had once more fixed the bait on his hook and had tossed it in. All of a sudden, after the boys had been sitting quietly on the bank for some time, Ted whispered:

“I’ve got a bite!”

“Don’t lose him!” warned Dick.

“I won’t!” cried Ted.

“Maybe it’s the other rubber boot, a brother or sister of the one I pulled out!” chuckled Buddy.

“I’ve got something alive!” exclaimed Ted.
“It isn’t a boot! I’ve got a real fish!”

And he had, for his line was cutting back and forth in the water as something that had hold of the hook below, and out of sight, darted

to and fro. And then, with a quick motion, Ted suddenly flipped a good-sized fish out of the creek.

“Oh, you’ve caught one!” cried Buddy.

“Sure I have!” said the young fisherman.
“Hurray!”

“Don’t let him get away!” begged Dick.

But there was no chance of that. Ted ran back too quickly to the place on the grass where the fish had flopped and soon had his prize secure. Buddy and Dick were a little bit envious of their chum’s good luck, but they were also glad. And they felt quite jolly, a little later, when each one of them caught a fish, though neither was quite as large as the one Ted had pulled out.

After that luck was very good and when it came time for the boys to go home Buddy had five fish, while Ted and Dick had six each. But Buddy’s last catch was an extra large one, the biggest fish caught that day, so his five were equal to the other boys’ six.

“My goodness!” exclaimed Mother Mar-

tyne when she saw Buddy coming up the walk with his pole over one shoulder and carrying the string of fish in his other hand. "Where did you buy them?"

"Buy them?" cried Buddy in surprise. "I didn't buy 'em! I caught 'em!"

"Oh, I know you did!" laughed his mother. "I was only teasing you!"

"Well! Well!" said Grandpa Kendall as he saw the string of fish. "How much do you want for them, Buddy?"

"How much—how—" Buddy did not quite understand. And then as it came to him he exclaimed: "I'm not going to *sell* these fish! Here, Grandma, I'll *give* them to you!" he added as the dear old lady came out on the porch. "I heard you say you liked fish. These are for you!"

"Oh, how wonderful!" she murmured. "Some fresh fish will taste right nice. I haven't had much appetite lately."

"You're quite a fisherman!" said Grandpa, and Buddy wished his father had been there

to see. But Mr. Martyne had to go back to Mountchester on some business, though he planned to return, soon, to Blue Hill and spend the rest of the summer vacation with his family. "I thought maybe, Buddy," said his grandfather with a funny twinkle in his eyes, which he always had when he joked, "I thought maybe you were going to sell fish to get money for your skates."

"No," answered the little boy with a laugh, "I'm going to raise a prize pumpkin for that. And so is Ted and so is Dick. We're all going to show big pumpkins at the Fair."

"Look out they don't beat you!" warned Mrs. Martyne.

"Oh, my pumpkin is going to be the best!" said Buddy.

He gave his fish to Hank Hoke, the hired man, who cleaned them and Grandma Kendall said she had never tasted a better meal than when Buddy's catch was served for supper that night. He felt quite proud of the fuss made over him and his fish.

Two or three days after this Buddy went to the cornfield to look at his pumpkin again. He thought perhaps it might need watering, but Grandpa Kendall said there was time enough for that.

“Don’t get lost again,” warned the old gentleman as Buddy started off down the road.

“I won’t,” he said, and he didn’t. For he went along the fence until he came to the place where he knew he must turn in to find the pumpkin patch. And as he and his grandfather had marked a sort of path with stones through the tall corn, it was easy to find.

“It’s getting bigger and bigger,” said Buddy in delight as he walked around the yellow vegetable and pulled out a few weeds that he feared might stop the growth of the pumpkin vine. “I wonder if it’s bigger than Ted’s or Dick’s?”

There was only one way to find out if his boy chums had larger pumpkins than the one with which Buddy hoped to win a prize and that was to go look at theirs. Dick and Ted had in-

vited him to come to their fathers' farms and this was a good time for the visit.

So, after making sure there were no bugs or worms eating his pumpkin vine, Buddy went out to the road again and started for Ted's house. He might have gone a shorter way through the corn, but he did not want to get lost again, and the corn was taller than before.

After going along the road until he was past his grandfather's corn patch, Buddy took a path that led across an old deserted farm where no one now lived. It was between the Taylor farm and that of Blue Hill as Grandfather Kendall's place was called.

There was an old house and barn on this lonely farm and someday, Buddy thought, he and his chums would explore the buildings and see if they could find anything in them. But Buddy was too busy to stop now.

"If Dick's pumpkin, or Ted's, is bigger than mine," thought Buddy as he hurried through the tall weeds of the old farm, "maybe

I can work around mine or give it extra water or something to make it grow faster. Grandpa said if you hoed around a plant it would grow faster than if you let the ground stay hard. I want to get a prize for my pumpkin."

Buddy was half way across the old yard about the deserted farm house, and he was thinking so much about what fun he would have when he got the new skates that he did not pay much heed where he was walking.

All of a sudden he felt his feet slip from beneath him. He felt himself tumbling forward.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Buddy.

He began falling down into a dark hole that, somehow or other, opened right under his feet in the tall weeds. He threw out his hands to catch hold of something and save himself, but the weeds pulled out by the roots as he grabbed them.

Farther and farther down into the hole fell poor Buddy. He could not imagine what had happened.

CHAPTER XV

BUDDY'S WATER CART

THOUGH it seemed to Buddy that he was a long, long time falling down into that hole, really it was very short; not even a quarter of a minute. For a little while he feared that he might be falling down "all the way through to China," as he said, afterward. When he was smaller, Buddy used to dig holes in the back yard at home and once, in fun, Lola, the maid, had said if he wasn't careful he might dig all the way through the earth and come out in the land of China.

"Think of that!" said Lola.

Of course that was only a joke, but Buddy, for a time, believed it. And now, as he was falling, he thought back to the time when he used to dig holes.

"If I fall into China," the little boy mused,

“maybe I’ll see some friends of the Chinaman who owned the hen I found in the street.”

Then Buddy had no more chance to think queer thoughts for he suddenly stopped falling and landed on the bottom of the hole. But, to his delight, he wasn’t in the least hurt.

If you have ever jumped off a high beam in the barn down into a pile of hay, you know just how Buddy felt. Or if you have ever jumped off the top of the bureau into the middle of a spring bed you also know how Buddy felt when he landed on the bottom of the hole.

Only, if you please, don’t jump off the bureau onto your bed for your folks might not like it. You might break the springs.

Buddy did not exactly jump into a pile of hay or on a bed, but he fell, feet first, into a thick pile of dried leaves and grass on the bottom of the hole and he was no more hurt than if he had jumped in some soft cotton.

“This is lucky!” exclaimed Buddy with a laugh after he got over being surprised.
“What a soft fall!”

Then he looked around him to see where he was and saw that the hole was rather large and round and lined inside with cobble stones like those with which some streets are paved. Up over his head Buddy saw a circle of blue sky and then he looked down and saw where he was standing in a heap of dried leaves, weeds, and grass and he knew what had happened.

“I fell down into an old well,” said Buddy to himself. “It’s lucky there was no water in it.” Then, as he looked up and saw how far it was to the top, and noticed that there was no ladder in the well, or any rope that he might climb up, he began to wonder how he was going to get home. “I wonder if I can climb out?” thought Buddy.

But the stones that lined the well were smooth and his hands and feet only slipped off them as he tried to lift himself up.

“What am I going to do?” thought Buddy. “I’ve got to get out somehow.”

There really was only one thing to do and that was to call for help as he had done when

he was lost in the corn. If Buddy had been a bigger boy and had had a large knife, he might have dug out some of the stones, thus making holes for his hands and feet to use as steps so he could climb up.

But, being only a small boy, Buddy did the next best thing which was to yell for help. And when he began to shout his ears rang with the sound of his own voice. If you want to know how Buddy's ears felt put your head down in an empty barrel and shout as loudly as you can. Your ears will ring, let me tell you.

But Buddy knew he must get help so he kept on shouting and, after what seemed like a long time, though it was not more than five minutes, he heard a voice on the ground up above asking:

“What's the matter?”

“I'm down in the old well!” answered the prisoner.

“Who are you?” the other voice asked.

“Buddy!” was the reply. “Who are you?”

“Oh, Buddy!” cried the other voice and then it said: “I’m Dick!”

“Help me get out, Dick!” begged Buddy and then as the light over his head was dimmed by a shadow he looked up and saw his country chum.

“How did you get down there?” asked Dick in surprise.

“I fell when I was coming to your house,” Buddy answered. “Can you help me get out?”

“I’ll go tell my father and he’ll bring a rope,” Dick said. “Wait a minute! I’ll be right back.”

Of course the only thing Buddy could do was to wait there in the well, for he couldn’t get out. And in a little while back came Dick not only with his father, but with Mr. Armstrong and Ted and soon a rope was lowered from above down to the prisoner in the well. In the end of the rope was a loop. Putting one foot in this loop, Buddy held to the upper part of the rope with his hands and the two men soon pulled him up to the top.

"Thank you," said Buddy as he found himself on top of the earth again. "I'm much obliged."

"You are quite welcome!" said Mr. Taylor with a laugh. "But after this I wouldn't fall down old wells, if I were you."

"I didn't mean to do it," Buddy said. "I didn't know the well was there. I couldn't see it on account of the high grass and weeds."

"That's right," said Mr. Armstrong. "We folks around here know about this old, dry well on the Huntley place. But others don't. It's dangerous and ought to be filled up. Some one else might fall in."

"They wouldn't get hurt," said Buddy. "There's a lot of dried leaves and grass on the bottom of the well, just like a cushion."

"No matter if they wouldn't get hurt," said Mr. Armstrong, "this well ought to be filled up or else there ought to be a fence around it so no one else will fall in."

"That's right," agreed Mr. Taylor. "You and I will fill it up," and the two men did,

with the help of the boys rolling stones in the well, and piling dirt on top until the hole was level and there was no more danger.

After Buddy had told his two chums all about his fall, the three of them went to look at their pumpkins. Buddy noticed that the other boys had done just as he had with his prize, yellow vegetable. They had pulled away the weeds, had hoed the dirt well up around the vine-hill and Ted's pumpkin had been freshly watered. Buddy wasn't quite sure, but he thought Ted's pumpkin had grown to be a little larger than the one in Grandpa Kendall's field of corn.

"I guess I'd better give my pumpkin some water," thought Buddy.

Dick's big vegetable, that he hoped would take a prize at the Fair was growing well. All three pumpkins were growing in corn fields which seemed to be the best place for them.

The boys played about, after looking at their three pumpkins, and then went to the

woods where they pretended to camp out, eating their lunch under the trees and having a good time.

Buddy planned to water his pumpkin late that afternoon but he did not have to for it rained and everything on all the farms around Blue Hill was well soaked. It rained next day, too, and this spoiled Buddy's plan for going on a "hike," or long walk, with Ted and Dick.

However his two chums came over to see him, wearing rubber boots and rain coats and they played in the barn and had almost as much fun as if the sun had been shining.

After that rain storm the weather turned dry for two weeks and though it was just fine for playing out of doors, more than once Grandpa Kendall was seen looking at the sky anxiously.

"What's the matter?" asked Buddy as he saw the old gentleman doing this one afternoon.

"I'm looking for more rain," was the an-

swer. "That little shower we had when you boys played in the barn wasn't enough. The crops need more water."

"Do you think my pumpkin needs watering?" asked Buddy.

"It will soon," answered his grandfather.

"Then I'll go get the watering can," said Buddy.

"You'll need more than a watering can," said Mr. Kendall. "You'll need a small keg full of water to soak your pumpkin vine. It isn't going to be easy to take water to the field on a wheelbarrow. I must see if I can't rig you up some sort of a watering cart."

"Oh, that would be fine!" cried Buddy. "Please do!"

So the next day Grandpa Kendall, with the help of Buddy's father and Hank Hoke, the hired man, made a watering cart for the little boy. It was a small barrel, or keg, fastened on two wheels of an old baby carriage and by means of a handle made from a broom stick Buddy could easily push his water cart along

the road and into the field where his pumpkin was growing. By taking down some of the fence rails he could wheel his water cart right into the field.

There was a rubber hose stuck in a hole in the bottom of the keg, and Mr. Martyne even found a small faucet so Buddy could turn the water on and off just like in the sink at home. So when he had wheeled his cart up close to his pumpkin vine all he had to do was to aim the end of the hose at it, open the faucet and the ground would soon be wet as if by rain.

“That’s a dandy watering cart!” cried Buddy and, filling the keg at the spring near the side door of the farmhouse, he set off down the road to take care of his pumpkin. The ground about it was dry and soaked up the water like a sponge as it sprayed from the hose.

When Buddy’s chums heard about his water cart they made something like it for themselves, only Dick’s was a square box instead of a keg, and Ted’s was an old wash boiler

mounted on two iron cultivator wheels. But, at any rate, the three prize pumpkins would not lack for water now, even if it did not rain.

It was about a week after he had first used his water cart that Buddy, once more, was on the way down the road to the field to give his pumpkin "a bath," as he called it, that, all of a sudden, out of a small house, half way to the pumpkin patch, came running a queer little old lady who shouted:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Buddy knew the old lady. She was Mrs. Shale, and lived all alone in the small house.

"Fire! Fire! Fire" she cried again, as she saw Buddy. "Come and help me put out the fire!"

Buddy was glad he had his water cart with him, but he could not imagine where the fire was, for he saw no smoke. But the queer old lady was quite excited and as she ran toward the little boy she cried again:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

CHAPTER XVI

COWS IN THE CORN

WHERE is the fire?" asked Buddy as he began pushing his water cart in toward her front gate which the old lady held open for him: "I don't see any smoke."

"It's around back, in my summer kitchen," answered Mrs. Shale. "Some of the coals fell out of the stove and they set fire to the board walk. If we don't put it out it may set the house on fire. Hurry!"

This was the first time Buddy had ever heard of a board walk being on fire, but he did not stop to talk about that now. He was playing the part of a fireman and firemen never stop to talk about a blaze until it is out.

"Hurry! Hurry!" cried Mrs. Shale, and when Buddy had pushed the wheels of his cart inside the gate she took hold of the handle with

him, letting the gate swing back into place, and shoved beside the little boy.

"You came along just in time," said Mrs. Shale who was not quite so excited, now that she had help to put out the burning board walk. "Did you know my summer kitchen was on fire?"

"No'm," answered Buddy, "I didn't."

"Then how did you happen ~~to~~ come along with your water cart?"

"I was going to water my prize pumpkin," said Buddy.

"Whoever heard of watering a pumpkin?" asked Mrs. Shale in surprise.

"I want it to grow big so I will win a prize at the County Fair," Buddy explained. "I want to get a pair of ball bearing rubber wheel roller skates."

Mrs. Shale did not answer to this because, just then, she and Buddy pushed the water cart around the corner of the little house, and the small boy saw where the fire was. There was now some smoke to be seen and a little

blaze. And, just as Mrs. Shale had said, the fire was in the boards of a walk that led from the back stoop on down through the garden and to the barn and cow shed.

“Quick!” cried the old lady. “We must put out the fire!”

“Let me do it!” begged Buddy. “I know how to squirt it! It’s got a hose just like a real engine.”

“Why, so it has!” exclaimed Mrs. Shale. “It’s wonderful!”

“Only there’s no engine or a pump,” went on Buddy. “But it squirts dandy!”

By this time there was quite a little blaze in the boards of the walk and among the dried leaves in the cracks between. However, it was out in the open, and not very near the house in which the old lady lived all alone, so there was not much danger except to the shed which she called her summer kitchen. Like many country women, Mrs. Shale did not want to heat her house up in summer by cooking in it. So she had a stove set up under a shed

near the back door and here she cooked her meals. But the stove was old and cracked and some live, hot coals had fallen out, thus starting the fire in the board walk.

Buddy and Mrs. Shale pushed the water cart as close to the blaze as was safe and then Buddy lowered the length of rubber hose and opened the faucet. Out spurted the water, the drops spraying on the creeping flames with loud hisses. To and fro Buddy moved the hose as he had seen real firemen do, and so he covered the fire from end to end. A cloud of steam and smoke arose, which always happens when water is thrown on a flame.

"Fire's out!" cried Buddy in a little while and, indeed it was.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said the old lady. "Thank you, so much, little boy!"

"You're welcome," Buddy answered, looking in the keg to see how much water was left. There wasn't much for he had opened the faucet wide, and not half way as he did when he watered his pumpkin. But when you start to

put out a fire you want to use all the water you can, and as quickly as you can. Buddy knew that.

"I'll give you more water," said Mrs. Shale, as she saw Buddy looking down in the keg. "But what was this you told me about a pumpkin? I was so excited I didn't listen before."

Then, as he looked at the smoke drifting away, Buddy told how his grandfather had given him a pumpkin which might grow large enough to win a money prize so the little boy would have enough to buy the wonderful skates.

"Oh, so that's it!" exclaimed Mrs. Shale as she looked to make sure there were no sparks left which might start a fire after Buddy had gone away with his water cart. "So you are earning money for your skates? Well, then I ought to pay you for helping me put out this fire."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Buddy. "I couldn't take money for doing anybody a favor. Some day I'm going to be a Boy Scout and Boy

Scouts must do good turns every day without any pay."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Mrs. Shale with a smile. "Well, then I must thank you a great deal for what you did."

"You are very welcome," answered Buddy politely.

There was a pump near the summer kitchen, or shed, and Mrs. Shale might have used that to put out the fire, but she said she was so excited, when the hot coals fell out of the stove on the board walk, that she forgot all about the pump. However from the pump some water was had to fill Buddy's keg again and he was ready to go on to the corn field and wet his pumpkin vine so it would grow better.

"I must get that stove fixed," said Mrs. Shale as she put a piece of tin over the hole in the cracked door of which the burning coals had fallen. "But this is the first time it ever dropped any sparks. Are you hungry?"

"Why—er—yes—I guess I am—a little,"

Buddy answered. It was some time since breakfast. "Only I can't stay to dinner, thank you," he added. "I got to go water my pumpkin."

"I wasn't going to ask you to stay to dinner," said the queer old lady with a laugh. "Though I like company. I don't have much, however. But I had just finished baking a chocolate cake when this fire started. And if you would like a piece of cake and a glass of milk I'd give it to you. Would you?"

"Yes'm," answered the little boy with a smile, "I think I would; very much."

And a little later he was sitting on a bench under the shady grape arbour in the back yard, near where the board walk had burned, and he was munching chocolate cake and drinking milk. It was a fine lunch for a small fireman.

Then while Mrs. Shale held the front gate open for him, Buddy pushed his cart out into the road and down to the corn field and soon his pumpkin had another "bath."

Buddy had a piece of string by which he measured how big around his pumpkin was. Each time he measured he tied a knot in the string and just before he watered the yellow vegetable this time he took another measure of his prize.

“It has grown an inch since I was here last time!” cried Buddy in delight as he noticed where the last knot was. “Oh, it’s getting very big!”

And so the pumpkin was. But the pumpkins of Ted and Dick were also growing large. Buddy wondered whether he would get the prize or whether it would go to one of his chums.

He was having a fine time during this vacation at Blue Hill. He liked being on his grandfather’s farm. Every day there was something new to do. But Buddy did not play all the while. He had his work, or “chores” to do, helping his grandfather or grandmother. Sometimes he helped Hank Hoke by holding a horse for the hired man or by going

to the barn for something he had forgotten. And often Buddy helped Maggie by bringing in wood for her kitchen fire. There was no gas at Blue Hill though they had electric lights, and a fire had to be kindled in the stove when meals were to be cooked.

One evening, after supper, when Buddy and his folks had been at Blue Hill about a month, and when they were all sitting on the porch, from down the road came the voice of some one shouting loudly.

“What’s that?” asked Buddy’s father.

“Sounds like Hank Hoke yelling,” said Grandpa Kendall. “Yes, it is Hank,” he added as he listened to the voice again.

“What’s he saying?” asked Buddy. They all listened. Then they heard Hank shouting:

“Cows in the corn! Cows in the corn! Come and get ’em out! Cows in the corn, Mr. Kendall.”

“Oh, they’ll get my pumpkin!” exclaimed Buddy.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BIG WIND

DOWN off the porch ran Grandpa Kendall, Buddy's father and Buddy himself. Mrs. Martyne and her mother, who was Buddy's grandmother, remained seated in their chairs.

"There will be men enough to drive the cows out of the corn," said Grandma Kendall with a smile. "Poor Buddy," she went on as she saw how fast the little boy was running to keep up with his father and grandfather, "he worries about his pumpkin."

"He thinks too much about it, I'm afraid," said Mrs. Martyne.

She walked to the edge of the porch.

"Oh, no, let the child have some fun!" said her mother. "It is a good thing for him and the other boys to try and raise prize pump-

kins. They will learn the value of money by hard work."

"If only the cows don't eat them up—I mean eat the pumpkins," went on Buddy's mother with a laugh.

"Well, I guess I'm smart enough to know that cows don't eat little boys!" chuckled Grandma Kendall.

Buddy, hurrying with his father and grandfather down the road in the direction whence Hank Hoke had shouted, soon came to the beginning of the corn field. Out in the road was a lone cow and, for a moment, Buddy wondered why the hired man had made such a fuss about a lot of cows being in the corn. But as he came nearer he saw where several of the animals had broken down the fence to get in for some of the sweet, green fodder.

"I only hope they let my prize pumpkin alone," murmured Buddy.

"Come on! Come on!" cried Hank who, after shouting the alarm, had run into the field, through the broken fence, and who now

came running out again, wildly waving his arms. "There's a dozen cows in here!"

Buddy could well believe that as, looking through the rows of corn, he could see a number of the big animals moving about, trampling down the tall stalks.

"Whose cows are they?" asked Grandpa Kendall. "Are they mine?"

"No, they belong to Nick Remminger," answered the hired man. "They must have gotten out of his pasture. I was coming along back from the village and I saw 'em running along the road. Then a stray dog barked and rushed at 'em and they got scared and jumped off the road and into your fence. They broke right through the rails."

"Well, a rail fence is easily mended," said Grandpa Kendall. "If it had been barbed wire one of the cows might have been cut. And I would not want any cows hurt, even if they do trample a little of my corn."

"I don't want 'em to eat my pumpkin!" said Buddy.

“Oh, there isn’t much danger that the cows will eat pumpkins when they can have fresh, green corn!” said Mr. Martyne. “But if they should trample on that prize of yours, Buddy, they might spoil it for the Fair.”

“That’s right,” agreed the small boy. “Come on, let’s drive ’em out!” He caught up a stick and dashed in through the broken fence after his father and grandfather. The lone cow had now followed the others..

“They haven’t done much damage yet,” said Hank Hoke. “But they may if we don’t soon drive ’em out.”

So the three men and Buddy ran here and there through the corn, shouting to frighten the cows back out through the hole in the fence. And, after a while, during which time many hills of corn were trampled down, and some small pumpkins stepped on, the animals were at last herded back into the road.

Then while Hank and Grandpa Kendall put the rails of the fence back in place, Buddy and his father drove the cows down the road in the

direction of their pasture from which they had strayed.

Pretty soon some men and boys came hurrying up the road. They were from the Remminger farm and had started after the straying cows as soon as they heard they were loose.

"I'll take charge of my animals now, Mr. Kendall," said Mr. Remminger. "I'm sorry they got into your corn. I'll pay for the damage they did."

"Oh, it wasn't much," said Buddy's grandfather with a laugh, as he came walking along with the hired man, the fence having been mended. "We drove them out before they spoiled Buddy's prize pumpkin."

"That's good," chuckled the other farmer. "I've heard a lot about this prize pumpkin business," he added. "If I wasn't so busy with my cows I might go to raising pumpkins myself."

"I guess you'll take a prize with that fat pig of yours," said Mr. Kendall. "How about it?"

“He’s fatter than any pig I ever had,” said Mr. Remminger. “I think I’ll get a prize for him. And if I do, Buddy,” he said to the boy, “and if you get a pumpkin prize, we’ll have a celebration.”

“That’ll be fine!” said Buddy with a laugh.

Then when the cows were on their way back to their pasture Buddy and the three men returned to Blue Hill Farm, to tell Mrs. Kendall and Mrs. Martyne all that had happened.

It was getting dusk now. But there had been light enough for Buddy to see, before starting home, that his prize pumpkin had not been nibbled or stepped on by any of the cows.

The hot summer days, with a little rain now and then, and with the water from his cart which Buddy sprayed on his pumpkin vine, was causing the yellow vegetable in the corn field to grow larger and larger. But it would be bigger yet before it would be time to pick it and take it to the County Fair.

Meanwhile Buddy, Ted and Dick had lots of fun on the farm, or rather, on the three farms,

for the boys went from one to the other. Sometimes their mothers would get up a picnic and even the men folks would find time to go along and eat lunch in the woods. And with that and with chores to do and crops to gather there were busy times in the country.

One day Buddy was walking home across a hill after leaving Ted and Dick with whom he had been hunting for a groundhog. They had no luck, not even finding the groundhog's hole, or burrow in the earth, where he lived. They were not going to shoot the woodchuck, as groundhogs are often called. Buddy just wanted to get his picture with a small camera he had brought from home. But Mr. Groundhog-Woodchuck kept well hidden.

However if Buddy had no luck that way he had in another, for on the edge of the hill he saw the bright rays of the setting sun gleaming on something red under green leaves.

"Wild strawberries!" cried Buddy who, the week before, had found a few in another place. "Oh, what a lot! I'll get them for

Mother and Grandma! They love 'em!"

Quickly he was on his knees down in the grass and leaves, carefully parting the vines to gather the small, bright red berries which have such a lovely taste—much better than "tame" strawberries.

Besides his camera Buddy carried a small basket in which his grandmother had sent a sample of her chocolate cake to Mrs. Taylor. Dick's mother had given the basket to Buddy to take back with him and now it was just the right thing in which to gather the wild strawberries. Buddy soon had it filled and then, thinking how delighted his mother and grandmother would be with this fruit, he hurried down to the road and toward Blue Hill Farm.

He had walked on only a little distance when an auto, with two ladies, one of whom was driving the car, came along. Seeing the little boy with the basket of berries they stopped and the lady at the wheel asked:

"Are you selling those berries, my dear?"

"Oh, no," answered Buddy.

"I'll give you fifty cents for them," said the other lady. "I never saw such delicious wild strawberries!" she added.

Buddy would have been very glad to get the fifty cents. It would have been quite an addition to the money he was saving up for his skates.

"But I picked these berries for Mother and Grandma," he thought to himself. "I'm not going to sell them—not even for a dollar!"

So he gently shook his head and answered:

"Thank you, no, I can't sell these."

"Why not?" asked the lady driving the car.

"'Cause they're for my mother," Buddy replied.

"Oh, then of course you can't sell them!" exclaimed the other. "I wouldn't dream of asking you had I known that," she said. "But I would love some wild strawberries."

"You can pick some up on that hill," Buddy said, pointing to where he had gathered the berries. "There's a lot more where I picked these."

“Oh, are there?” cried the lady at the wheel. Then to her friend she said: “Come on!”

A moment later they had parked the car at the side of the road and were scrambling over the fence and up the hill like a couple of girls, laughing and talking with delight at the chance of finding wild strawberries.

Buddy went on with his basket of red fruit and his mother and grandmother were much pleased at the treat he brought them. Buddy would not eat one berry for himself, though his mother wanted him to.

“No,” he said, shaking his head, “I can pick me some more tomorrow. These are for you and Grandma.”

However, Buddy wondered whether the two ladies would leave any wild strawberries on the hill. They seemed anxious to get all they could. But there were many green ones and these would be ripe later.

Buddy intended to go to Strawberry Hill, as he called it, next day, but in the night something happened that made him forget all about

the wild, red fruit. And what happened was a storm, with a big wind, that blew up in the darkness.

Buddy was awakened by a dash of rain against the window of his bedroom. The window, partly open, was rattling noisily. Then his mother came in to close it and Buddy asked, sleepily:

“What’s the matter?”

“Oh, there’s a very bad storm,” his mother replied.

“Snow?” asked Buddy.

“Snow in summer? Of course not! But there is a very big wind.”

“It’s the wind that’s going to do the damage,” Buddy heard his grandfather say out in the hall. “I’m afraid it will blow all my corn away.”

Buddy suddenly sat up in bed. If it blew away his grandfather’s corn it might also blow away his big, prize pumpkin. That would be too bad!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COUNTY FAIR

BUDDY thought there was only one thing for him to do. That was to save his prize pumpkin. Of course he felt sorry for his grandfather whose corn might blow away. But if the wind blew the big pumpkin off into the woods it might be broken. Then it could not be shown at the County Fair and Buddy would have no chance to get prize money so he could buy the wonderful skates. So the small boy began to get out of bed while all through the house windows were rattling, shutters were banging and in one room some rain leaked in. Buddy could hear his mother calling for Maggie to bring a pan to catch the water. Then Mrs. Martyne went in Buddy's room.

“Why, what are you going to do?” Buddy's mother asked him in surprise. “You're up!”

“I’m going to get dressed and go out to see if my pumpkin is all right,” was the answer. “I don’t want it to blow away.”

“Goodness! You can’t go out in this storm!” said his mother with a little shiver as another blast of wind shook the house. “You would blow away, Buddy! Get back into bed! I wouldn’t dream of letting you go out in this storm! It’s terrible!”

“But,” said the little boy who was half dressed, “I heard Grandpa say his corn would blow away and if my pumpkin——”

The old gentleman heard this and came into Buddy’s room.

“Don’t worry about your pumpkin,” said Mr. Kendall. “This wind may knock down a lot of my hills of corn and it may tear some up by the roots and blow them away. But your pumpkin is safe. It is so big and heavy and so close to the ground that it can’t blow away.”

“Can’t it—really?” asked Buddy, feeling better on hearing his grandfather’s words.

"Oh, no," his grandfather answered and then Buddy crept back to bed. It was some time, though, before he could get to sleep again on account of the noise made by the storm, and once he thought the house was going to blow away.

"Maybe it would be like Noah's Ark if it did," thought Buddy. But he need not have been afraid. His grandfather's house was firm and strong and when the little boy awakened in the morning the wind had gone down and the storm was over. It was raining hard, though.

At the breakfast table nothing much was talked of but the storm of the night. It had done some damage on the farm but no one was hurt and an old chicken coop, no longer used, was the only building that was blown down.

"Could I go look at my pumpkin now?" asked Buddy after breakfast.

"Oh, it's raining too hard," his mother said.

"I don't believe it will do any harm if he puts on his boots and rain coat," said Buddy's

father, knowing how anxious was his son.
“I’ll go with him.”

“Oh, goodie!” cried Buddy jumping up and cracking his heels which made everybody laugh.

In a short time he and his father and grandfather were on their way to the corn field. Mr. Kendall wanted to see how much of his crop had been spoiled. But it wasn’t as bad as he had feared. Only a few hills were knocked down.

Buddy hurried through the opening in the fence toward where he knew his pumpkin was growing, but his heart seemed to sink away down to the bottom of his boots when he looked and could not see the big, round, yellow vegetable. He knew where it should have been for there was a stick thrust into the ground near the vine.

“Oh, my pumpkin is gone!” cried Buddy.
“It blew away!”

“It couldn’t blow away!” his father said.

“But it’s gone! Look!” cried the little boy.

“Where is it?” and he pointed to a cleared place on the ground where he thought he would see the pumpkin.

Grandpa Kendall, who had been trying to straighten up some of his hills of blown down corn, came along just then and asked what the matter was.

“My pumpkin is gone!” sighed Buddy. He felt very sad. But Grandpa Kendall began walking around among the hills of corn where, as could easily be seen, the water had risen high in the night. Much dirt was washed away from the hills of corn. Off to one side was a big pile of broken corn stalks, leaves and bits of wood that had been washed there by a small stream of rain water that had run down the field.

The old gentleman farmer began pulling the sticks, leaves and corn stalks off this pile and soon Buddy saw something yellow gleaming in the rain.

“Oh, there’s my pumpkin!” he cried.

“I hope it isn’t broken off the vine,” said

Mr. Martyne. "It is too soon to have it stop growing."

"It isn't off the vine," said Mr. Kendall. "The high water that rushed down through the field washed the pumpkin away and piled a lot of stuff on top of it. But the pumpkin isn't hurt at all. It is still fast to the vine and it will keep on growing."

He had cleared the stuff away now so the pumpkin could be plainly seen and then he rolled it back into a little open place between the hills of corn. The vine was long enough to allow this.

"If you hoe some dirt up around the vine it will be all right," Buddy's grandfather said to him. "No harm has been done."

"I'll hoe the dirt as soon as it stops raining," the little boy said. "Hurray! My prize pumpkin is safe!" and he jumped up and tried to crack his heels together but found it hard work in rubber boots.

So the big storm passed and a few days later the earth had dried out and Buddy could hoe

around his vine. Ted and Dick had trouble with their prize pumpkins, too, but none of the three big vegetables was broken off the vines, which was very lucky.

For two weeks after the big rain there was no need for Buddy to carry water in his cart to the prize pumpkin. Then came a spell of dry weather and he had to take water to his vegetable every other day so the vine would not dry up and die. Many other pumpkin vines died from lack of water and some of Grandpa Kendall's corn, that the wind had not blown down, turned yellow for need of rain. But Buddy took good care of his prize pumpkin.

"It may bring my skates," he said.

Another week passed and then rain came, in time to save the crops. Buddy did not have to cart any more water. He and Dick and Ted had time to play around the farm. They got up another picnic and went fishing again. This time Dick fell in the creek, but as he had on old clothes, and could swim very well, he

soon splashed his way out and went right on fishing. Buddy and Ted laughed.

Buddy's pumpkin was now the largest of all those in his grandfather's field, and, so the old gentleman said, was the largest pumpkin he had ever seen on his farm.

"I think you'll get the prize, Buddy," he said.

"I hope so," was the answer. "But Ted's pumpkin is big and so is Dick's. They look even bigger than mine."

"Well, we'll measure them when we get them to the County Fair," said Mr. Kendall.

It was drawing near the time for the Fair to be held. Just outside the town of Greenpoint, which was a few miles from Rillglade, were the fair grounds. There was a race track, many buildings where cows, sheep and pigs were shown and other buildings where the farmers put their best vegetables on view and where their wives showed their canned fruit and fancy work.

All along the roads to and from Blue Hill

Farm were now gay posters like those of a circus, telling about the County Fair. Every time he saw one of these posters Buddy got quite excited. Two or three times a day he would go to the field to look at his pumpkin. And he read over and over again what it said on the posters about the prizes to be given. There were special prizes for big pumpkins. The first prize was five dollars, the second three and the third one dollar.

“Even if I win second prize I’ll have almost enough for my skates,” Buddy said, for he had earned quite a few pennies by doing chores for his grandfather.

At last came the day when the pumpkin, having grown as big as it could, was to be cut off the vine and taken to the County Fair, with other things from Blue Hill Farm. You can imagine how excited Buddy was. He went with his father and Hank Hoke, the hired man, who were to put the pumpkin on a wheelbarrow and bring it to the house ready to be taken to Greenpoint next day

"Be careful now, please!" begged Buddy as Hank took out his knife.

"I'll be careful," said the hired man.

His knife cut through the vine, leaving about three inches on Buddy's pumpkin for a handle. And the yellow vegetable was so big that it was all Hank could do to get it in his arms and lift it up into the wheelbarrow.

"Don't drop it!" begged Buddy. "Be careful, please! Don't drop it!"

"I won't!" said Hank, and he didn't.

That night, before he went to bed, Buddy washed all the dirt off his pumpkin and then he tied on it the entry card with his name showing that he was trying for a prize. He was so excited he hardly slept that night.

"All aboard for the County Fair!" cried Grandpa Kendall next morning. Such a time as there was! Such hurrying to and fro! Such a jolly breakfast! Then Hank started off with a big auto truck containing not only Buddy's pumpkin but a big prize pig, and many other things from Blue Hill Farm.

From Mr. Taylor's and Mr. Armstrong's farms, also, exhibits were sent. The fair was not to open until next day when all the things would be in place. But Buddy went to Greenpoint with his father and grandfather soon after Hank started off with the truck, to see his pumpkin put safely in the exhibition building.

The Fair grounds were a busy place with hundreds of men, boys, women and girls getting things in readiness for the visitors next day. Buddy saw Ted and Dick, who had brought their pumpkins, and the boys' three big yellow vegetables, with others like them, and many other things from farm and garden, were put in a building by themselves, each one bearing a tag with the owner's name. Buddy tried to decide whether his pumpkin was bigger and better than any of the others, including Ted's and Dick's.

But it was hard work without something to measure by. And then, too, Buddy knew that to get a prize a pumpkin must not only be the

largest, but the *best* in shape, with a smooth skin. Still his pumpkin seemed to be the best so far on view. Though others might be brought in later.

When he and his chums had seen their pumpkins put in place they wandered about the Fair grounds looking at the other exhibits being set out for the visitors to view next day. It was more fun than Buddy ever thought he would have.

“But wait until tomorrow!” cried Dick. “That’s when the Fair opens! There’ll be a big time then!”

“That’s right!” chimed in Ted. “I want to be on hand when they judge our pumpkins. I’m going to get first prize!” and he laughed.

“No, I am!” said Dick. “I’ll get first prize.”

“We can’t all get first prize!” Buddy said in a low voice. He was hoping very hard, but no one could tell what would happen.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRIZE PUMPKIN

BANDS were playing and gay flags fluttering in the air from the tops of buildings and tents on the County Fair grounds. It was a bright September day and on all the roads leading to Greenpoint were many automobiles and a few wagons, bringing crowds to the big "Cattle Show," as many of the country folk called the Fair.

Mingled with the autos bringing visitors were big trucks in which were cows, bulls, rams, sheep and pigs—late exhibits at the Fair. The first day of the fair was always a mixed-up one but the show was to last for a week so there would be plenty of time to see everything.

"Oh, what fun!" cried Buddy in delight as he sat in the auto with his father and mother,

his grandfather and grandmother and rode to the Fair. Then Buddy forgot where he was and tried to jump up and click his heels together. His mother had to hold him in the seat. "There's Dick!" cried Buddy as the auto went in the big gate of the Fair grounds. "And there's Ted!" he added a moment later. "Hello!" he called to his chums.

"Hello! Hello!" answered Ted and Dick.

"Oh, won't we have fun!" yelled Buddy.

"We sure will!" said the other boys.

The autos were parked and then the boys jumped out to go around in a company of three to look at the different sights. They were told to come back to the parking place at noon when they would have lunch with their folks.

There were almost as many things to see at the County Fair as there were at a circus, only, of course, no wild animals like lions, tigers or the big, kind, patient elephants. And there was not so much of a show with men and women swinging from trapeze bars high in the air. But there were other things, and some

side shows where Buddy and his chums saw pictures of a lady with a lot of snakes twined around her, and other pictures of a man breaking chains with his bare hands and another lady so fat that, Buddy said, she was almost as big as some of the prize pigs.

There were rows after rows of pens containing sheep, oxen, pigs, cows and horses. There were many coops of fancy chickens, and some rabbits, guinea pigs and dogs.

“So much to see!” cried Buddy.

Buddy and his friends hurried from tent to tent, from one building to another and from place to place. Now they would stop near where a cider mill was pressing the brown juice out of crushed apples, and they drank a little of the sweet nectar. Then they would stop to watch some new kind of a tractor or threshing machine being worked to let the farmers see what it could do.

“Oh, I’m going to have some of that popcorn!” cried Buddy as he passed a place where a man was shaking salt and pouring melted

butter over a fresh popper of the bursted, white kernels.

“How good it smells!” cried Dick as the three boys each bought a five cent bag. Buddy’s mother had given him some money to spend for treats so he would not need to take that which he had saved up to buy his skates.

Then they passed another booth where molasses candy was being made and this smelled even better than the popcorn, so they had to buy some of the brown, crisp sticks.

Here and there the boys ran, to and fro, stopping a little while in one place and then hurrying on to the next.

“What we don’t see today we can see tomorrow,” said Ted.

“Yes,” agreed Dick, “I’m coming every day this week.”

“I guess I will, too,” said Buddy. “But when,” he asked, “do you think they will judge our pumpkins?”

“Oh, it will take a couple of days to do all

the judging," said Ted who had been to the County Fair a number of times before. "We'll just have to wait."

Buddy hoped he might know, that night, whether or not he had won the prize, but he had to wait. For when it came time to go home that afternoon there were no prize tickets on the pumpkins or any of the other vegetables. Some pigs and cows had been judged and Grandpa Kendall got one first prize for the fattest pig at the fair and this pleased Buddy almost as much as it did the old gentleman.

"For I helped feed that pig," said Buddy. And so he had, often tossing an extra apple or ear of corn into the pen for the big animal who grunted his thanks and scratched himself against a post. Grandpa Kendall's pig turned out to be fatter than Mr. Remminger's, whose cows got in the corn.

The next day there were even more things to see at the fair than on the opening, for the last late exhibits were now in place and the

show was running along smoothly. Buddy, Ted and Dick had lots of fun, and they were quite excited over the horse racing.

“But when will we know about our pumpkins?” asked Buddy more than once during the day and at last his grandfather managed to find out, from some of the officers of the Fair, that the vegetables would be judged for prizes late that afternoon.

You can easily imagine how excited Buddy and his chums were when the men who were to decide which was the largest pumpkin, or the biggest ear of corn, came toward the building where the boys had placed thier “jack o’ lanterns,” as Mr. Martyne jokingly called them.

Others than the three boys had entered pumpkins for a prize and they stood anxiously about as the judges went from table to table measuring and feeling of the different exhibits. It was seen at once that some of the pumpkins had no chance. Not many were as large as those of Buddy and his chums.

And finally the three yellow vegetables belonging to Buddy, Ted and Dick were picked out for final judging as being the three best in the show. The boys had looked after their growth carefully, keeping the weeds away from the vines and giving the vegetables water when the weather was dry.

With tape measures the judges spanned first Buddy's pumpkin, then Dick's and then Ted's. They put down some figures on paper and then got their heads together like boys playing football and whispered. Finally one of the judges took some red and blue and white ribbons from his pocket and walked toward the three pumpkins. He started to speak and Buddy's heart seemed to stop beating.

"We find," said the judge, "that this pumpkin is the biggest and best, so it gets first prize."

He fastened a blue ribbon on the stem of—whose pumpkin do you suppose?

Yes! Buddy's! Buddy had won the first prize of five dollars!

Oh, what a proud, happy boy he was!

And yet he felt a little sorry—yes, a great deal sorry—for Ted and Dick. There were no blue ribbons on their pumpkins.

Buddy looked anxiously at his chums.

But the judge had not finished. He went on:

“Both these other two pumpkins are so large and fine that it is hard to tell which is best. They are exactly the same size. Not as big as this one,” and he put his hand on Buddy’s pumpkin, “but only a few inches smaller. So we give a second prize to each of these,” and he fastened a red ribbon on Ted’s pumpkin and another red ribbon on Dick’s. They had each won a prize of three dollars which was almost as good as Buddy had done.

“Oh, I’m so glad!” Buddy exclaimed as he saw what had happened to his chums. “I’m so glad!”

“So are we!” said Dick with a laugh. “Second prize is better than none.”

“And you ought to get first, Buddy, for your

pumpkin is quite a bit bigger than ours,” added Ted. “It’s a lot bigger!”

And when Buddy was given a crisp five dollar bill from the judge the little fellow jumped up in the air and clicked his heels, not once but twice. Think of that!

“Now I can get my skates!” he said.

CHAPTER XX

BUDDY WINS THE RACE

NOT much that happened at the Cardiff County Fair after the prize-winning pumpkins were picked out had an interest for Buddy Martyne. He was so excited at getting the money that he could hardly wait to tell his chums how glad he was that they, too, had won prizes.

“When can I go back home and get my skates?” he asked his father.

“Oh, we’re going to stay at Grandpa’s for a while yet,” Mr. Martyne said with a laugh. “Vacation isn’t quite over, but almost. Soon you will have to go to school again, Buddy.”

“I like school,” said the little boy. “I can skate to school on my new skates. And I’m glad I got all the money for them myself,” he added. “I earned it; didn’t I, Grandpa?”

"Indeed you did," his grandfather answered. "You worked hard to raise that prize pumpkin and you did a lot of chores for me. I shall be sorry when you go home, Buddy."

"Oh, I'll come again," offered the small boy. "Maybe I'll come on my skates next time."

"All right!" his grandfather said. "I'll be watching for you."

About two weeks after that, the visit at Blue Hill Farm came to an end. Mr. and Mrs. Martyne and Buddy packed up and started back for Mountchester. Buddy wanted to take the prize pumpkin with him, but found it quite too large.

"I'll feed it to my cows," said his grandfather, "and they may think of you when they chew on it, Buddy."

"I'll think of cows, too," Buddy answered, "and how Mr. Remminger's got in the corn."

Then he jumped and clicked his heels.

He said good-bye to his two country chums and late that afternoon Buddy was back in his own home. Lola had supper waiting for the

family, for she had opened the house in readiness for the home-coming.

"Hey, Tom!" called Buddy in front of his chum's house after the evening meal. "Come on out!"

"Hello!" greeted the other boy as he danced out on the steps. "Did you have fun this vacation?"

"Lots of it," Buddy answered. "And I won a prize for a pumpkin and I got enough money to buy those ball bearing rubber wheeled skates!"

"Whoop!" cried Tom. "I'm going to get a pair, too! But I didn't win any prize. I earned a little money this vacation, but not enough for skates. But my father gave me enough. Tomorrow we'll go down and each get a pair."

"That's what we'll do!" laughed Buddy. "Let's go tell Harry."

When they reached Harry's house he was just coming out. He, too, had that day returned from his vacation.

"I'm going to get a pair of those rubber wheeled skates, too," he said. "My grandmother gave me the money."

"Three pairs of skates! Whoop-la!" cried Buddy, jumping up and clapping his heels together twice again! Oh, he was learning that trick well; wasn't he?

"We can have a race!" said Tom.

"That's right," agreed Harry, "a race on our new skates! What fun!"

The next day three very excited small boys hurried into the toy shop of Anton Rudolph. The old gentleman shuffled out from his back room.

"Vat iss all dis?" he asked with a smile.

"We want three pairs of those new rubber skates!" cried Buddy. "I want a pair and so does Tom and so does Harry!"

"Mine gracious!" cried Mr. Rudolph with a laugh. "Vot a lot of business!"

He was very glad to sell the skates and soon the boys had them strapped on their shoes and were out on the sidewalk. At first the skates

felt a little strange, being different from the iron wheeled rollers they had used before. The very quietness of them was strange.

But the three chums quickly learned how to manage them very well, and were soon gliding up and down the sidewalks, almost "like shadows," as Buddy said. For the skates made scarcely a sound.

The boys practiced for two or three days and then one morning Buddy went over to Harry's house, carrying the new skates, and said:

"Let's have a race."

"Sure!" agreed Harry. "We'll get Tom."

There was a long, smooth stretch of sidewalk near Tom's house and this would be a very good place for a race, to see which of the three boys could go fastest on his new skates. Some of the other boys who had the old style rollers, and some of the girls who had none at all, gathered to watch.

"Get in line!" called fat Jerry Fleck. "I'll give the word to go!"

Buddy, Tom and Harry stood in a row

across the sidewalk at a chalk line drawn by Mary Norse.

"Are you all ready?" asked Jerry.

The boys looked at their feet and Harry saw that one of his straps was loose.

"Wait a minute!" he begged, and he fastened it.

"Where is the finish?" asked Buddy, for the race was gotten up in such a hurry that all the details had not been decided on.

"We'll skate down to the corner and back," said Tom. "Whoever gets back to this chalk line first, after turning at the corner, wins the race. How about it?"

"That's fair," said Jerry Fleck. "Get ready!"

Buddy and his two chums stood with their skates on the chalk line. Jerry looked to see that the way was clear and then he called:

"One! Two! Three! Go!"

Away the three raced, going very fast but making very little noise on account of the rubber wheels of their new skates.

"Oh, Buddy's ahead! Buddy's ahead!" cried Mary. And he was, for a while. But, after a bit, Agnes Fleck called:

"Now Tom is ahead!" And Tom passed Buddy and Harry.

Then, suddenly, Harry spurted up, making his legs and feet go very fast so that he passed both the others and was leading the race.

"Harry's going to win! Harry's going to win!" yelled Jerry.

And it seemed so, for Harry was first to reach the corner and turn to come back to the chalk line. However, Buddy was not far behind him nor was Tom.

But now the street was up hill instead of down and the boys could not go so fast. They had to slow up, and, for a little way they were even. Then Buddy seemed to move ahead. He was a sturdy little chap and his work in the country, doing chores, crawling under the barn after eggs and carting water to his pumpkin had made his legs strong.

On he went, past Harry and then past Tom

and on and on along the uphill sidewalk until he saw the chalk line, that was the finish, in plain sight.

"Come on, Tom! Come on!" called Jerry.

"Hurry, Harry! Hurry!" yelled Agnes.

"They can't beat Buddy! Buddy is going to win!" shouted some of the other boys and girls.

And that is what happened. For Buddy shot across the chalk line and won the race, with Tom second and Harry third.

"Hurrray for Buddy!" cried the boys and girls, and Buddy felt so glad that he tried to jump up in the air and crack his heels. But he could not do that with skates on.

"Well, it was a good race, even if I got beat!" panted Harry.

"Sure it was!" agreed Tom. "Buddy beat us fair and square!"

"It was these skates," said the red-haired blue-eyed boy. "They're the fastest skates in the world, I guess!"

Then the boys and girls gathered around

Buddy and cheered him again and again!

This was not the last race the boys had, and in the next one Harry won. Buddy and his chums had many fine times on their skates and in other ways before school opened a week later. And the next adventures of the blue-eyed and red-haired lad will be told in the book after this, to be called: "Buddy in School; or a Boy and His Dog."

"Well, Buddy," said his mother when he came in one night after having been out skating with his friends, "are you having fun?"

"Lots of fun," Buddy answered. "But the most fun, I think, was when that Chinaman came running after us to get back his hen."

"Yes, that was funny," said Mrs. Martyne, and she and Buddy laughed together.

THE END

